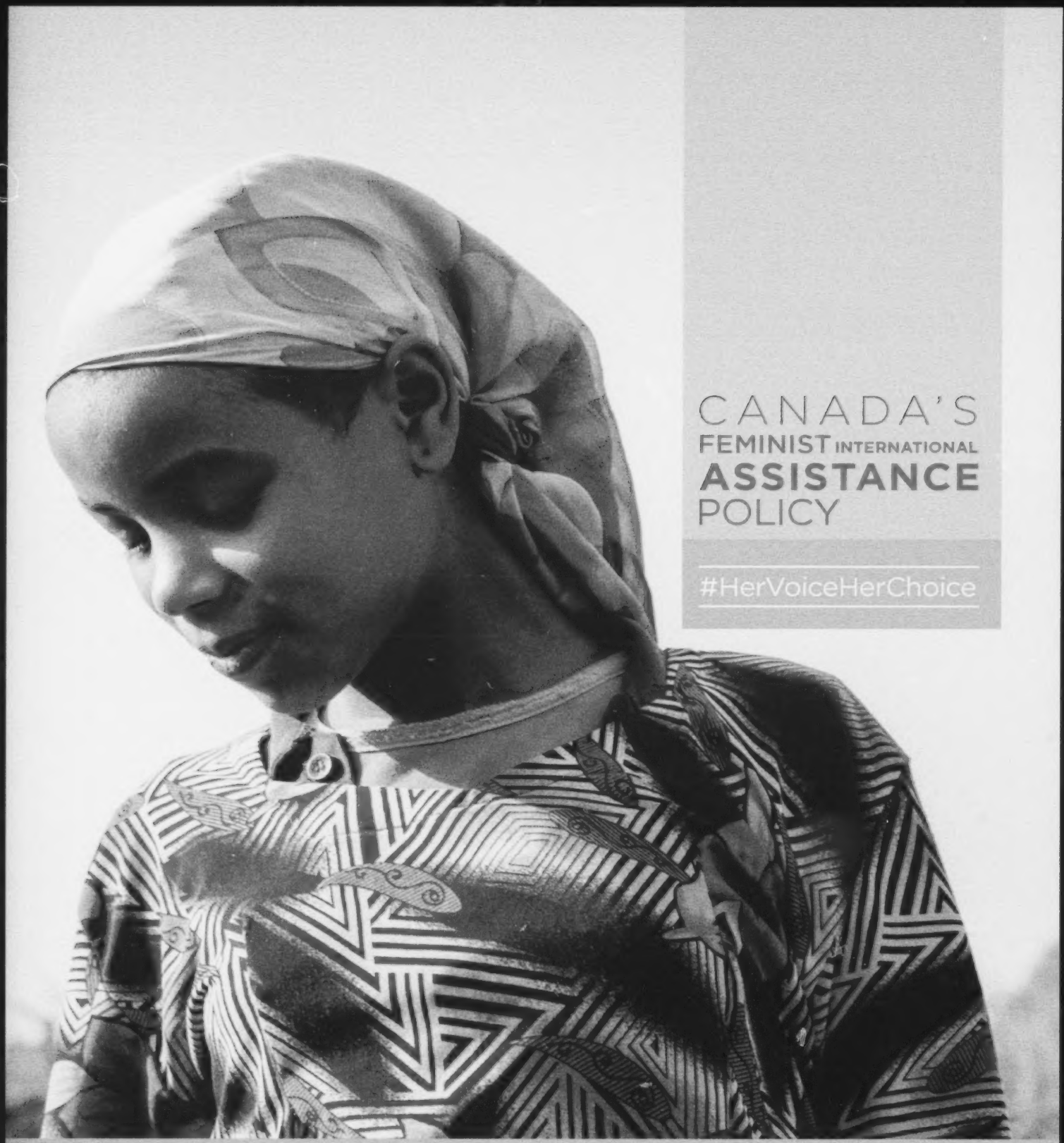

CANADA'S FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

#HerVoiceHerChoice

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Peace and prosperity are every person's birthright. Today, as Canadians, we have a great opportunity to help the people of the world's developing countries join the global middle class and the multilateral system that supports it.

It is worth reminding ourselves why we step up—why we devote time and resources to foreign policy, trade, defence and development: Canadians are safer and more prosperous when more of the world shares our values.

Those values include feminism and the promotion of the rights of women and girls.

It is important—and historic—that we have a prime minister and a government proud to proclaim themselves as feminists. Women's rights are human rights. This includes sexual and reproductive rights—and the right to access safe and legal abortions. These rights are at the core of our foreign policy.

I am delighted my colleague the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie is launching Canada's first Feminist International Assistance Policy, which targets gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We are positioning Canada at the forefront of this global effort. This is a matter of basic justice and also basic economics. We know that empowering women, overseas and here at home, makes families and countries more prosperous.

Now is the time to rise to the great challenges of this century. As I said in the government's foreign policy statement, our job today is to preserve the achievements of previous generations, and to build on them, as we are doing through Canada's first Feminist International Assistance Policy.

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Minister of Foreign Affairs

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LA FRANCOPHONIE

The Prime Minister gave me the mandate to refocus Canada's international assistance on helping the poorest and most vulnerable people and supporting fragile states.

After a year of consultations involving more than 15,000 people in 65 countries, I am proud to present Canada's new **Feminist International Assistance Policy.**

The primary objective of this policy is to contribute to global efforts to **eradicate poverty** around the world. To achieve this, we must address inequality. Specifically, we need to make sure that women and girls are empowered to reach their full potential so they can earn their own livelihoods, which will benefit families as well as the economic growth of their communities and countries.

This policy responds to the recommendations made by stakeholders and reflects Canadian values. It defines an approach based on human rights, one that takes into account all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, place of birth, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability or migrant or refugee status.

The policy is evidence-based and takes into account Canada's expertise and comparative advantage. It supports the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to eradicate poverty by 2030, and it is also aligned with the Paris Agreement on climate change, which seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment.

I want to highlight three issues that particularly captured my attention during the consultations. First, I heard that our policy must underscore the importance of **human dignity** at a time when conflicts are multiplying and humanitarian principles, international laws and human rights are increasingly under threat. Second, if we want to maximize the impact of our actions and help eradicate poverty, we must passionately defend the **rights of women and girls** so they can participate fully in society. And lastly, for our actions to be sustainable, we must ensure that they contribute to **building local capacity**.

Canada's vision for international assistance, therefore, is as follows:

> **"Canada is adopting a Feminist International Assistance Policy that seeks to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Canada firmly believes that promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving this goal."**

As a result of this new policy we will focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in a manner that is both **targeted and crosscutting**. A targeted approach to gender equality allows us to focus on initiatives that fight poverty and inequality by supporting gender equality and defending the rights of women and girls, particularly their sexual health and reproductive rights. Going forward, these initiatives will receive special, focused attention. A crosscutting approach to gender equality means that all of our international assistance initiatives, across all action areas, should be developed and implemented in ways that improve gender equality and empower women and girls. This approach also means that all our implementing partners must consult with women and involve them in needs assessments, decision making and planning of initiatives, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Canada has adopted a feminist approach because we firmly believe that women and girls have the ability to achieve real change in terms of sustainable development and peace, even though they are often

the most vulnerable to poverty, violence and climate change. So we will work closely with local women's rights groups, particularly in the areas of sexual and reproductive health; in the fight against child, early and forced marriage; and in enabling access to the formal economy and decision making.

The core action area for the new policy—which will be integrated across all areas—is:

- **gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.**

The other action areas we have chosen are:

- **human dignity**, covering humanitarian action, health and nutrition, and education;
- **growth that works for everyone**, which targets areas such as sustainable agriculture, green technologies and renewable energy;
- **environment and climate action** focusing on adaptation and mitigation, as well as on water management;
- **inclusive governance**, including democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance; and
- **peace and security**, by promoting inclusive peace processes and combatting gender-based violence.

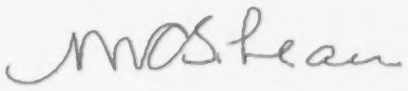
In terms of its geographical distribution, Canada will no longer limit its international assistance strictly to a list of countries of focus, nor will it disperse its efforts in all directions. We will strike the right balance to ensure that Canada's contributions have the greatest positive impact. We will address conflicts and climate change in fragile states and contexts, while continuing to foster economic development and growth that works for everyone in the poorest countries and supporting middle-income countries that face particular challenges, notably with respect to governance.

For our assistance to have the greatest possible impact on the ground, we must be determined but also creative, flexible and rigorous in our approach. We must be innovative and foster innovation in how we work—through our funding mechanisms and by forming new partnerships. We will make sound decisions based on evidence and closely track our progress, but in a manner adapted to the needs of different stakeholders in different contexts.

Today, Canada has the capacity to play a leading international role and will take the opportunity to implement its new vision for international assistance in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I will speak up for the poorest and most vulnerable, especially women and girls, and they can count on the commitment and expertise of our team in Canada and in our missions around the world, as well as the support of our many Canadian partners, with whom we are strengthening our collaboration.

As we implement this new policy, I will continue to engage with Canadians and our stakeholders, because the launch of this policy is not the end of the process but rather a first step in a longer journey to achieving the best international assistance results.

We commit to all of this because international solidarity is a shared Canadian value. We live in an increasingly interconnected world, and Canada's international assistance will benefit not only partner communities but also Canadians. Together with our international partners and allies, we have a collective responsibility to safeguard and promote global health and security, education, environmental protection and growth that works for everyone—and we will do so with conviction and pride.



The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau
Minister of International Development and
La Francophonie

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The last three decades have seen dramatic reductions in global poverty, but not everyone has benefited equally. Hundreds of millions of people, especially women and girls, are still poor, have unequal access to resources and opportunities, and face major risks of violent conflict, climate and environmental hazards, and/or economic and political insecurity. By eliminating barriers to equality and helping to create better opportunities, women and girls can be powerful agents of change and improve their own lives and those of their families, communities and countries. This is a powerful way to reduce poverty for everyone.

Canada is part of a global community. This is why we invest in international assistance: helping to eradicate poverty and vulnerability around the world enhances our own safety and prosperity.

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy recognizes that supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the best way to build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. To do this, it supports targeted investments, partnerships, innovation and advocacy efforts with the greatest potential to close gender gaps and improve everyone's chance for success. But it also works across other action areas that reflect the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. Working in this way leads to better development results and benefits everyone, including men and boys.

Canada's feminist international assistance will help protect and promote the human rights of all vulnerable and marginalized groups and increase their participation in equal decision making. This will help women and girls achieve more equitable access to and control over the resources they need to secure ongoing economic and social equality.

Committing to a feminist approach to international assistance represents a significant shift in how we work. A feminist approach is much more than focusing on women and girls; rather, it is the most effective way to address the root causes of poverty.

Canada is adopting a Feminist International Assistance Policy that seeks to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Canada firmly believes that promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving this goal.

Our priorities will be strengthened by work in the following action areas:

Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls will be our core area of work. We will support efforts to reduce sexual and gender-based violence, to strengthen women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights, to improve governments' capacity to provide services to women and girls and to improve gender analysis. We also believe that gender equality can be advanced throughout our work by integrating this analysis across the other areas of action. A feminist approach does not limit the focus of our efforts to women and girls; rather, it is the most effective way to fight the root causes of poverty that can affect everyone: inequality and exclusion.

To promote **Human Dignity** we will support access to quality health care, nutrition and education, and principled, timely, needs-based humanitarian assistance that better addresses the particular needs and potential of women and girls.

To foster **Growth that Works for Everyone** we will help increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources. This will help women and girls achieve the economic independence they need to take control of their lives.

To promote **Environment and Climate Action** we will support government planning and initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change, advance women's leadership and decision making and create economic opportunities for women in clean energy.

To support **Inclusive Governance** we will work to end gender discrimination by promoting and protecting human rights, advancing the rule of law and building stronger institutions. We will also encourage greater political participation by women and girls.

To help strengthen global **Peace and Security** we will support greater participation of women in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, help to increase women's representation in the security sector and enforce a zero-tolerance policy for sexual violence and abuse by peacekeepers.

We are also committed to improving the effectiveness of our international assistance, providing more integrated and responsive support, investing more in innovation and research, and becoming more transparent in our results and activities. We will concentrate Canada's international assistance in a way that will significantly improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable, including those living in fragile states. And we will use our assistance to mobilize additional resources for sustainable development, including through building new multi-stakeholder partnerships.

BUILDING A MORE PEACEFUL, MORE INCLUSIVE AND MORE PROSPEROUS WORLD

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy

Over the past three decades, the world has made impressive gains in reducing poverty.[1] Sustained economic growth has led to higher incomes, broader access to goods and services, and a better standard of living for many of the world's poorest citizens.

At the same time, millions continue to struggle in the face of persistent poverty and inequality, exacerbated by violent conflict and the effects of climate change. Women and girls—whose voices and interests are too often ignored—are particularly at risk.

The good news is that when women and girls are given equal opportunities to succeed, they can be powerful agents of change—driving stronger economic growth, encouraging greater peace and cooperation, and improving the quality of life for their families and their communities.

Investing in women and girls is the right thing to do and the smart way to reduce poverty and inequality.

For these reasons, Canada is committed to a new approach to international assistance: a truly feminist approach that supports the economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls, and makes gender equality a priority, for the benefit of all people.

Source: World Economic Forum

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Women and girls can change the world

As powerful agents of change, women and girls have the ability to transform their households, their societies and their economies. Increasing gender equality can:

- deliver strong economic growth
  Women already generate nearly 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) and the potential for further growth led by women is relatively untapped. According to a 2015 global study, achieving gender equality around the world could increase global gross domestic product by $12 trillion in a single decade.[2]

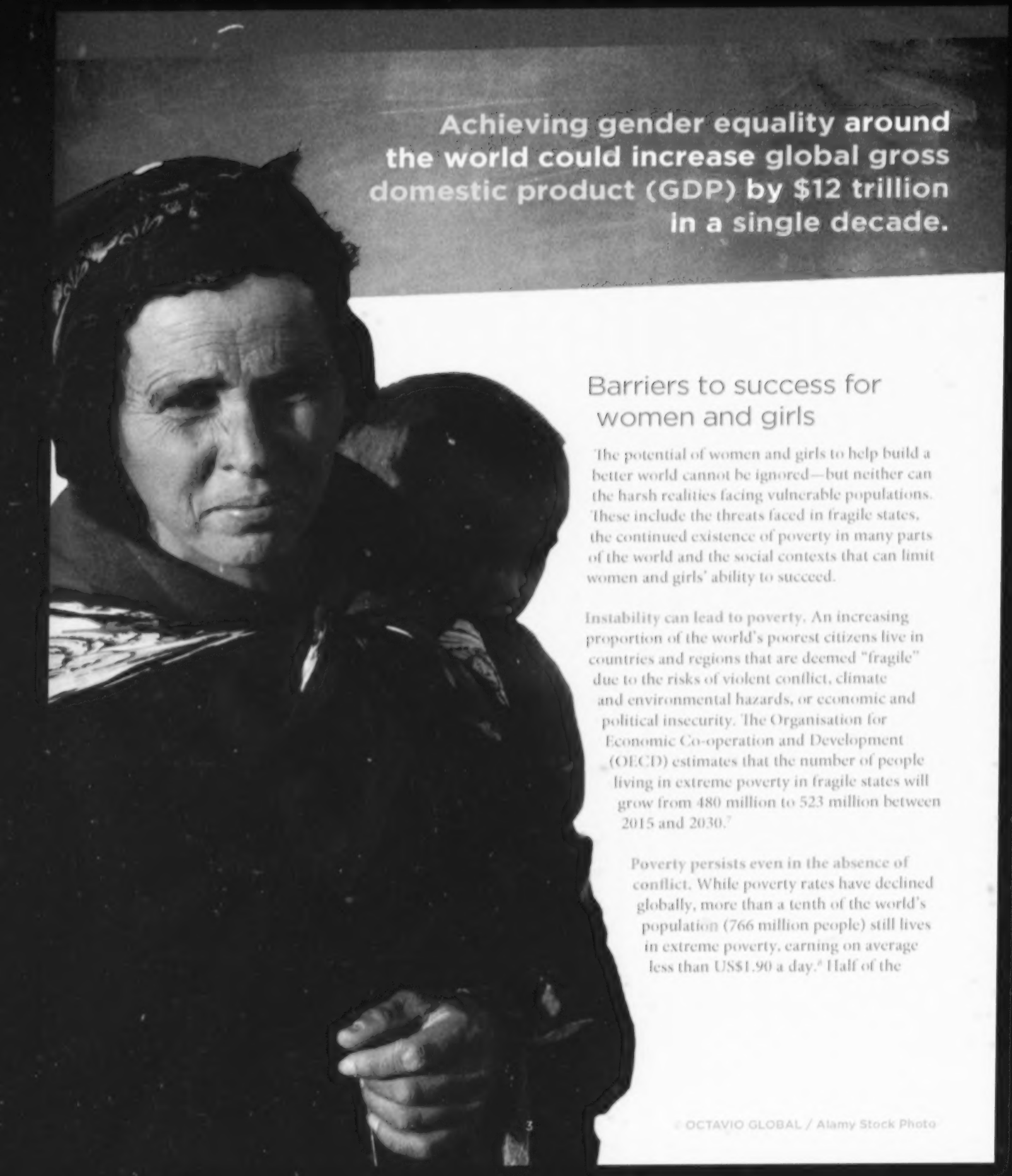
- help cut down on extreme poverty
  Ensuring that all students—especially girls—leave school with basic literacy skills could cut worldwide levels of extreme poverty by 12 percent.[3]

- reduce chronic hunger
  Providing female farmers with equal access to resources could reduce the number of people living with chronic hunger by as much as 17 percent, providing help and hope to as many as 150 million people around the world.[4]

- lead to longer-lasting peace
  It is estimated that in communities emerging from violent conflict, women's participation in peacebuilding increases by 35 percent the probability that a peace agreement will last for at least 15 years.[5]

- benefit entire families
  Evidence shows that women tend to spend more of their incomes in ways that directly benefit their children, improving nutrition, health and educational opportunities for the next generation.[6]

- and empower all those who face discrimination.
  Women and girls are not the only groups that face discrimination and inequality. Others face social and/or economic marginalization, including on the basis of their sex, race, ethnicity, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, or migrant or refugee status. By empowering women and girls as a means to achieve gender equality, we send the clear message that equality is for everyone.



Achieving gender equality around the world could increase global gross domestic product (GDP) by $12 trillion in a single decade.

Barriers to success for women and girls

The potential of women and girls to help build a better world cannot be ignored—but neither can the harsh realities facing vulnerable populations. These include the threats faced in fragile states, the continued existence of poverty in many parts of the world and the social contexts that can limit women and girls' ability to succeed.

Instability can lead to poverty. An increasing proportion of the world's poorest citizens live in countries and regions that are deemed "fragile" due to the risks of violent conflict, climate and environmental hazards, or economic and political insecurity. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that the number of people living in extreme poverty in fragile states will grow from 480 million to 523 million between 2015 and 2030.[7]

Poverty persists even in the absence of conflict. While poverty rates have declined globally, more than a tenth of the world's population (766 million people) still lives in extreme poverty, earning on average less than US$1.90 a day.[8] Half of the

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world's extreme poor live in sub-Saharan Africa, with the rest concentrated in Asia and some middle-income countries of Latin America.[9] The majority live in rural areas, have low levels of education and work in the agricultural sector. More than half of the world's poorest citizens are children.[10]

Women and girls face many gender-specific challenges that limit the economic and social opportunities available to them. These challenges include:

Diminished access to the resources and opportunities they need to survive and thrive. In many societies, women and girls often eat last—and least. They have more limited access to essential services such as education and health care, and fewer opportunities to work or earn a good wage.

More family responsibilities and fewer opportunities. In many of the world's poorest countries, in comparison to men and boys, women and girls face greater burdens of unpaid work, have fewer assets and resources, are exposed to higher rates of sexual and gender-based violence, and are more likely to be forced into early marriage.[11] Women with jobs typically work a greater number of hours in total than do men because of the double burden they face of paid work and unpaid domestic responsibilities. Women who are less able to undertake paid economic activities are pushed further into poverty.[12]

Limited control over their own bodies and reproductive choices. An estimated 15 million girls under the age of 18 are forced into marriage every year—that's 39,000 every day.[13] Every year, 16 million children are born to adolescent girls (age 15 to 19), accounting for just over one out of every 10 births worldwide.[14] For girls in developing countries, this makes it harder to stay in school and harder to work—perpetuating the cycle of intergenerational poverty. A recent study in Nigeria estimated that the gender gap in education could be cut in half if child marriage and early pregnancies were eliminated.

The ongoing threat of sexual and gender-based violence. It is estimated that one in three women worldwide have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes, often at the hands of intimate partners or family members. The threat of violence is also a reality for girls, with more

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than one in 10 (120 million) having experienced forced intercourse or sexual acts at some point in their lives. Female genital mutilation/cutting is a persistent threat as well. There are now an estimated 200 million girls and women who have been subjected to this practice, in 30 countries around the world.[15]

Limited access to the tools they need to be financially independent. Among working women in the least developed countries, 79 percent report agriculture as their primary source of income. Despite this strong contribution to local economies, women continue to have less access to resources and financial services than men.[16] Women account for fewer than 20 percent of all landholders in developing countries, and only 37 percent of these women landholders have bank accounts.[17]

Legal barriers to work and other limits on economic freedom. Women are legally discriminated against in more than 150 countries around the world.[18] This includes 100 countries in which women are prevented from pursuing careers because of their gender.[19] In some countries, women also face restrictions when it comes to registering a business, inheriting property and owning land. Nearly one third of developing countries do not guarantee the same inheritance rights for women as they do for men. These limits on women's economic autonomy can also be seen at the household level, with one third of married women in developing countries having no say in major household purchases.

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Fewer opportunities to attend school. Educated women and girls tend to marry later, have fewer children, and provide better health and nutrition for their families.[20] Evidence shows that when women and girls are educated and have control over their sexual and reproductive choices, maternal and child mortality rates decrease and families thrive.[21]

Unequal participation in governmental decision making. In most countries, it is governments that shape the development process. To ensure that women and girls have equal rights and the ability to take equal advantage of economic opportunities, governments must include gender analysis in planning, budgeting and policy-making and ensure women and girls have equitable access to essential services such as health, education and justice.

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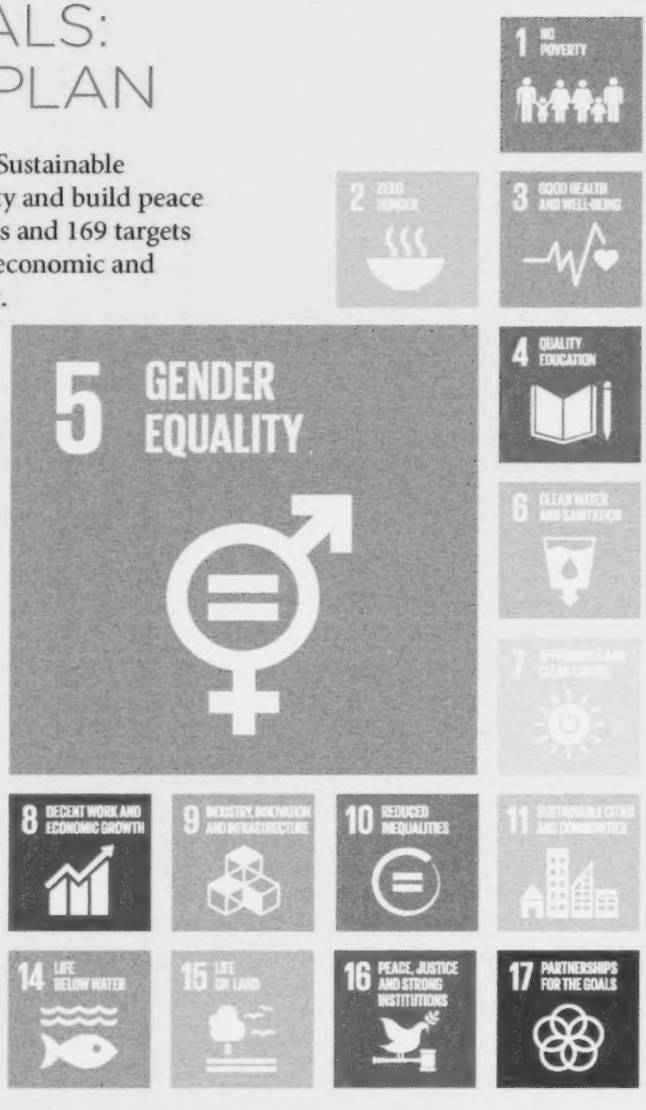
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A GLOBAL ACTION PLAN

In 2015, world leaders agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—a global action plan to eradicate poverty and build peace around the world. The 2030 Agenda's 17 universal goals and 169 targets are integrated and indivisible; they balance the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Sustainable Development Goal 5—achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls—is at the heart of Canada's approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda because it will drive progress toward achieving the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We believe that the best way to eradicate poverty and leave no one behind is through a feminist international assistance policy. We are committed to helping achieve the SDGs in Canada and in developing countries.



CANADA'S FEMINIST VISION

"Canada is adopting a Feminist International Assistance Policy that seeks to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Canada firmly believes that promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving this goal."

We believe that empowering women and girls is the best way to achieve positive economic and social outcomes. We believe that the inherent human dignity of all people should be respected and that everyone should have equal access to health care, proper nutrition, education and humanitarian assistance, irrespective of their gender.

We believe in economic growth that benefits everyone—and believe that when women and girls are given equal opportunities to succeed, they can transform their local economies and generate growth that benefits their entire communities and countries.

We believe that women and girls are disproportionately at risk from the effects of climate change and need better support to mitigate and adapt to changes that threaten their health and economic well-being.

We also believe in governance that effectively serves and includes all citizens, irrespective of gender or any other facet of personal identity.

Finally, we believe that women and girls have a vital role to play in establishing and maintaining peace in their communities—a necessary precondition for stronger economic growth.

A feminist approach to international assistance will help build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world—a world where gender equality is achieved and women and girls are fully empowered.

A feminist approach to international assistance places gender equality at the centre of poverty eradication and peacebuilding efforts by challenging the discrimination faced by women and girls around the world and by recognizing that inequalities exist along intersectional lines.

Our feminist approach is based on the conviction that all people should enjoy the same fundamental human rights and be given the same opportunities to succeed.

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy will prioritize the investments, partnerships and advocacy efforts that have the greatest potential to close gender gaps, eliminate barriers to gender equality and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls require the transformation of social norms and power relations.

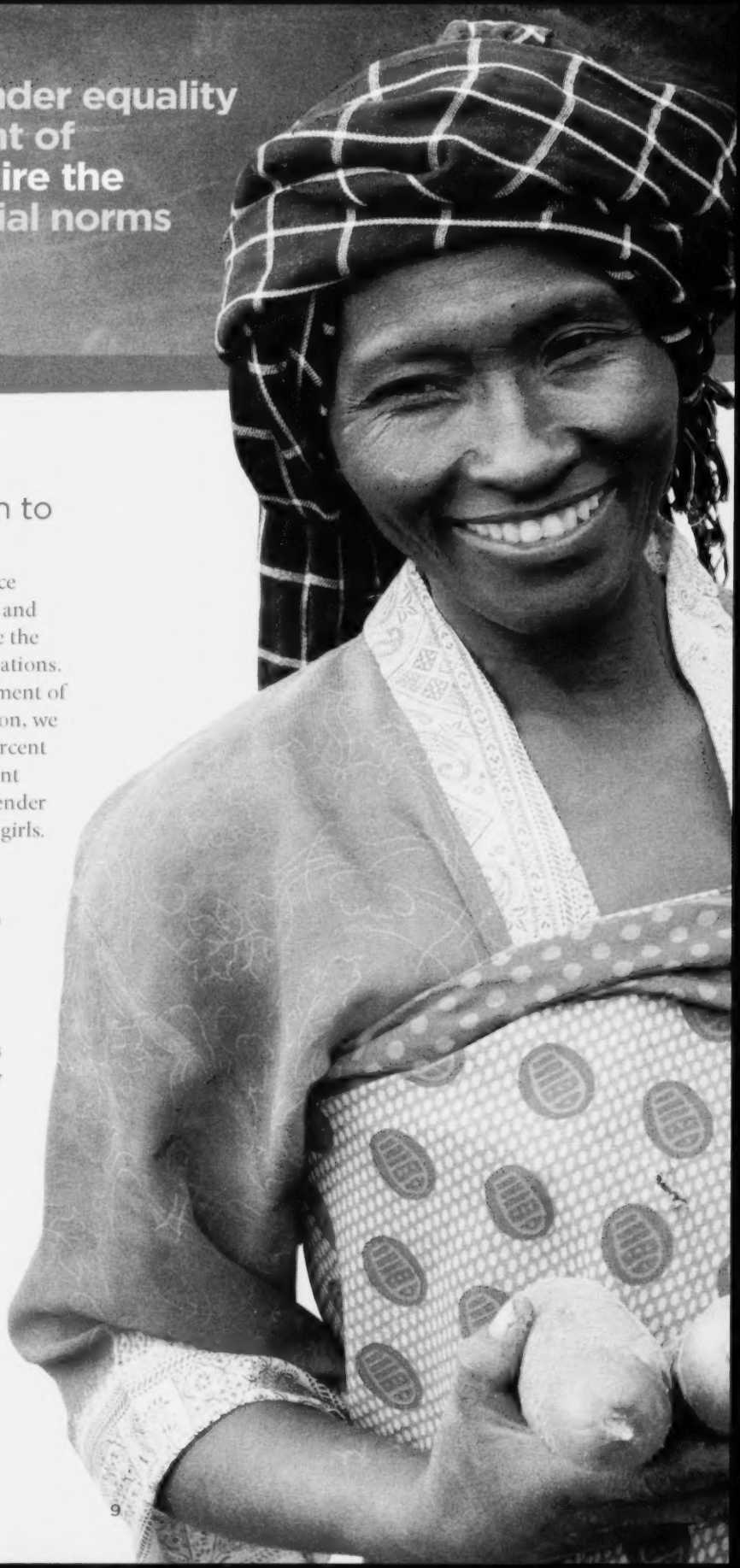
Canada's feminist approach to international assistance

A feminist approach to international assistance recognizes that promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls require the transformation of social norms and power relations. This objective is also essential for the achievement of all other development priorities. For this reason, we will ensure that by 2021-22 no less than 95 percent of Canada's bilateral international development assistance initiatives will target or integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Supporting local women's organizations that advance women's rights

For decades, women around the world have led the struggle for gender equality. Local women's organizations that advance women's rights, particularly at the grassroots level, play an important role in raising social awareness and mobilizing communities to change laws, attitudes, social norms and practices.

To better amplify women's voices around the world, Canada will collaborate with partners to pilot, design and champion new and innovative ways of working with local women's organizations that advance women's rights.



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Engaging men and boys

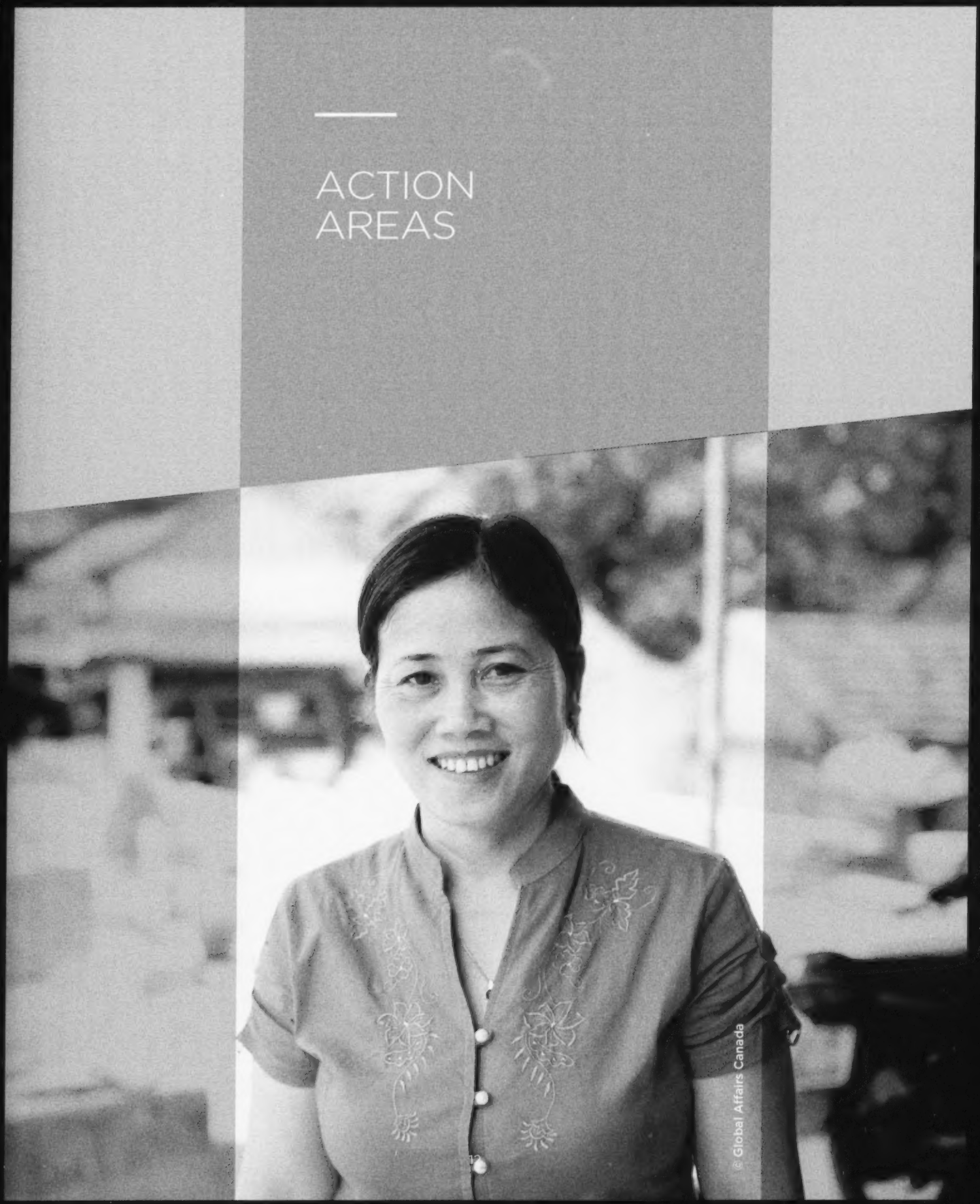
Gender equality cannot be achieved by women and girls in isolation. Men and boys must also challenge the traditions and customs that support and maintain gender inequalities. Because social norms and gender stereotypes also limit men and boys in their societal and family roles, it is important that men and boys be engaged in the fight for greater gender equality, be given opportunities to advocate for equality, and be encouraged to lead by example in respecting and promoting the interests of women and girls.

It is particularly important to transform the attitudes of adolescent boys, as gender constructs are shaped during adolescence. Engaging with adolescent boys provides the best opportunity to promote positive gender norms and prevent the perpetuation of negative stereotypes throughout their lives.

Canada is committed to providing feminist international assistance that is:

- **Human rights-based and inclusive** – All people must enjoy the same fundamental human rights, regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability or any other aspect of identity.
- **Strategic and focused** – Assistance will be directed toward those initiatives that best support the empowerment of women and girls and have the greatest potential to reduce gender inequalities.
- **Transformative and activist** – Unequal power relations and systemic discrimination, as well as harmful norms and practices, will be challenged, and a broad range of stakeholders—including men and boys—will be engaged.
- **Evidence-based and accountable** – Our assistance will be informed by gender-based analysis and will rely on clear accountabilities for planning, achieving, tracking and reporting on gender equality results.

ACTION AREAS



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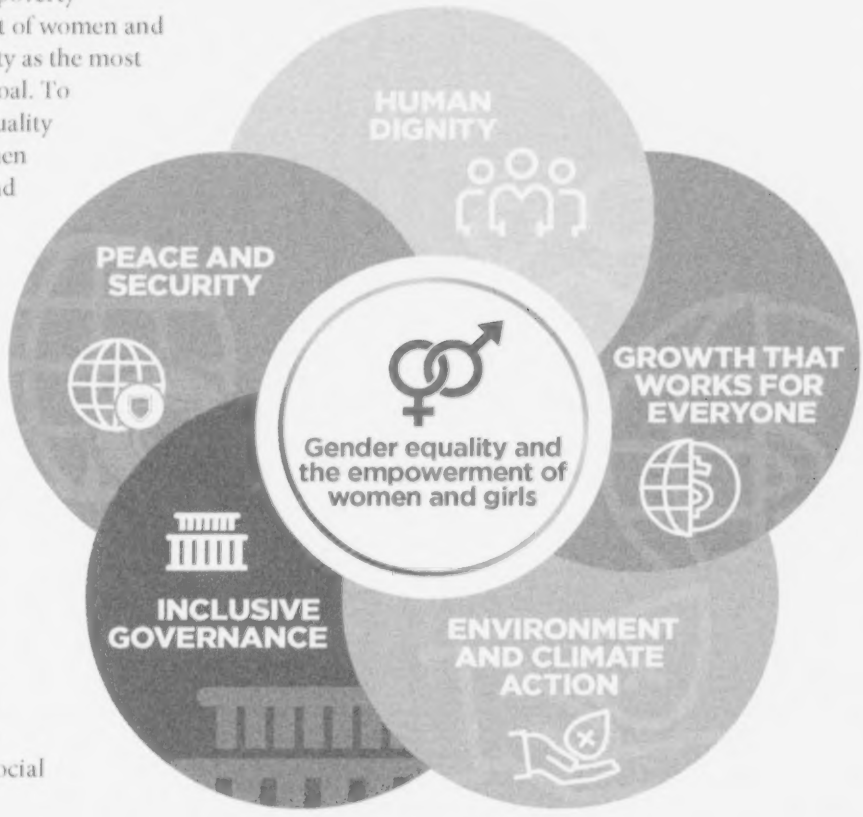
Committing to a feminist approach to international assistance represents a significant shift in what we do and how we do it.

Our approach focuses on the goal of poverty eradication and on the empowerment of women and girls and promotion of gender equality as the most effective approach to achieving this goal. To most effectively champion gender equality and the global empowerment of women and girls, Canada will advocate for and support initiatives that:

- enhance the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls;
- increase the participation of women and girls in equal decision making, particularly when it comes to sustainable development and peace; and
- give women and girls more equitable access to and control over the resources they need to secure ongoing economic and social equality.


HUMAN DIGNITY
PEACE AND SECURITY
GROWTH THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE
Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls
INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

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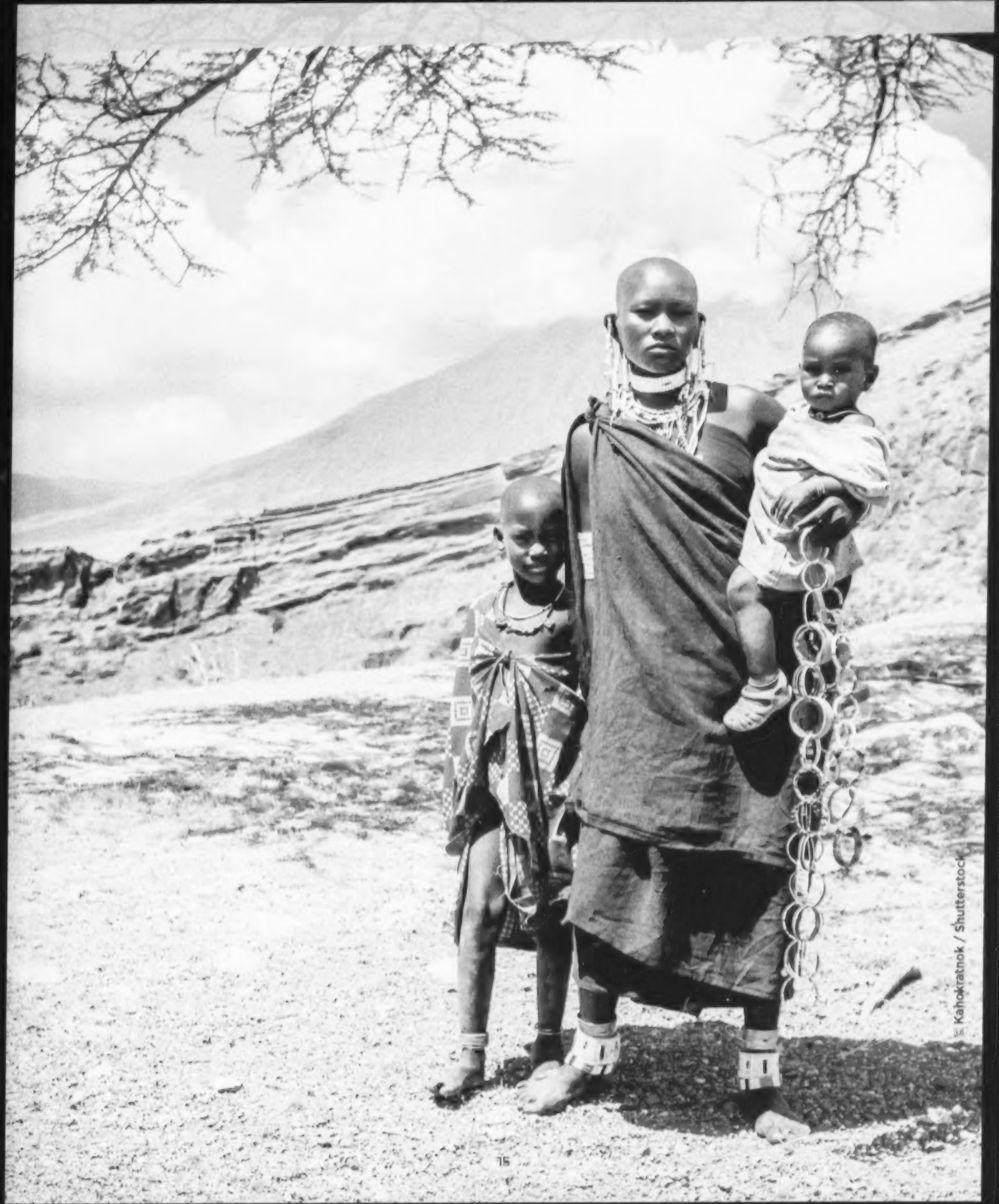
To ensure that Canada's international assistance is best able to achieve the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, Canada will focus its efforts on six action areas:

- CORE ACTION AREA: GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS
- HUMAN DIGNITY (HEALTH AND NUTRITION, EDUCATION, HUMANITARIAN ACTION)
- GROWTH THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE
- ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION
- INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE
- PEACE AND SECURITY

These action areas represent interrelated global challenges that, when addressed, will make a significant difference in the lives of the world's poorest and most vulnerable citizens, particularly women and girls.

Canada's approach will build upon our experience in increasing food security, ensure safe and secure futures for children and youth, stimulate sustainable economic growth and advance democracy, peacebuilding, stability and security. The new action areas demonstrate a shift toward a focus on the poorest and most vulnerable, and reflect areas in which we can have the greatest impact. An integrated approach across these six areas will allow us to deliver a transformational change to those most in need.

Within each action area Canada recognizes the importance of gender equality and the role that empowered women and girls can play in building a better future for themselves and for their entire communities.



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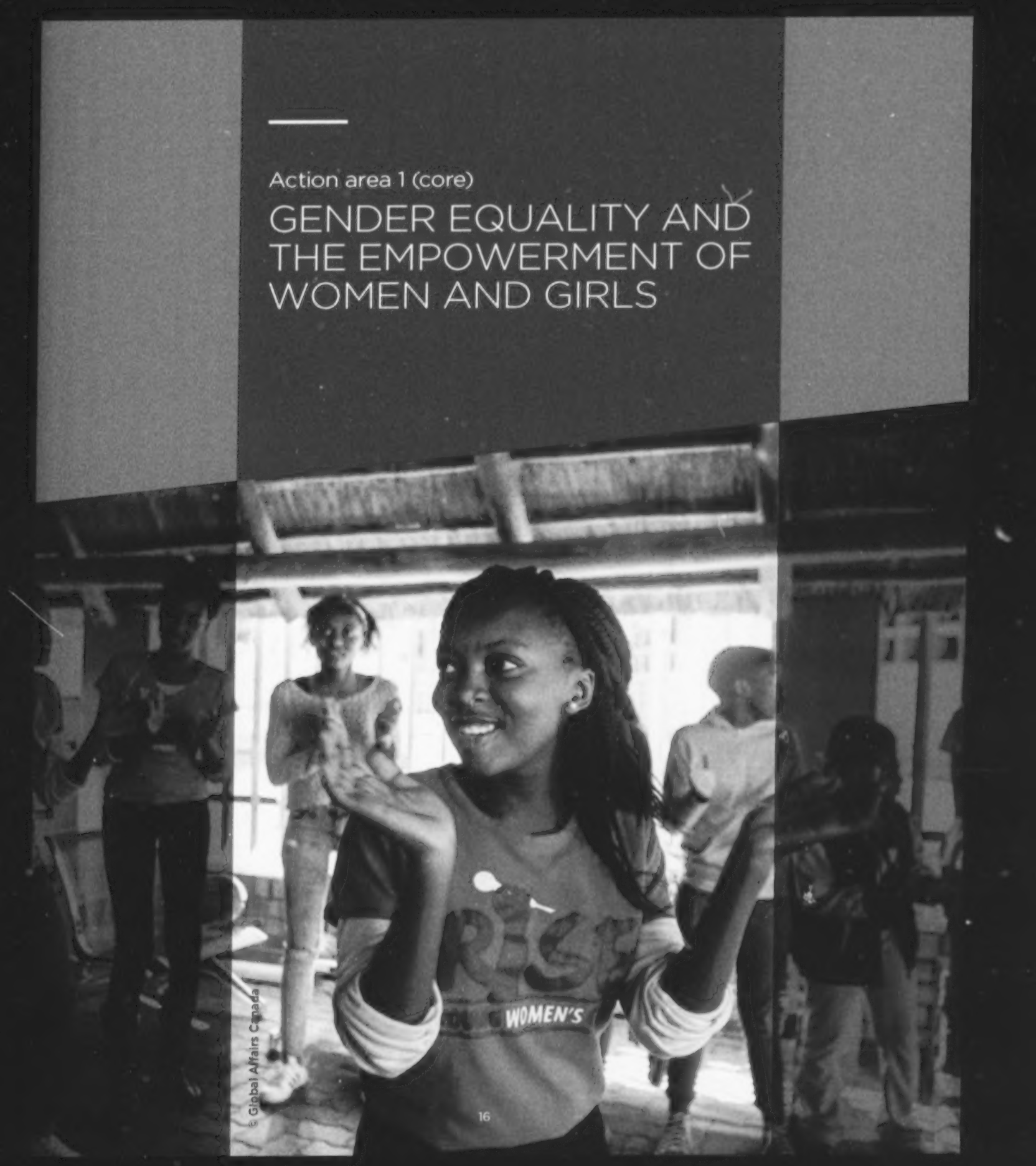
Action area 1 (core)

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS



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Global Affairs Canada from now on commits 15 percent of its bilateral international development assistance, across all action areas, to implementing initiatives dedicated to advancing gender equality and improving women and girls' quality of life.

In the context of this action area, this includes initiatives that enable the fight against sexual and gender-based violence, that support women's organizations promoting women's rights, that enhance the institutional capacity of the public sector to address gender equality and that build the evidence-base for gender equality action.

Canada will help address **sexual and gender-based violence**, one of the most pervasive and egregious human rights violations, through our advocacy and investments. Broader approaches are needed because preventing sexual and gender-based violence, supporting survivors and bringing perpetrators to justice involves a wide range of sectors, including health care, justice and policing, education, social protection, and economic development. For example, when women are more financially secure, they are better able to leave violent relationships.

It is essential that men and boys be engaged in this effort. To that end, Canada will—among other interventions—support the development of gender-responsive curricula in schools, work to address and transform harmful behaviours that can have negative consequences for all genders (such as sexual risk-taking, substance abuse and violence) and implement programming to better support fathers so that they gain the skills and confidence needed to care for their children—boys and girls—on an equal basis with their partners.

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TO BETTER SUPPORT GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, CANADA WILL...

...address the unacceptably high rates of sexual and gender-based violence experienced by women and girls. This will include support for comprehensive approaches that help end these forms of violence so that fewer women and girls are subjected to domestic violence; intimate-partner violence; trafficking and exploitation; child, early and forced marriage; and female genital mutilation/cutting. Canada's support will raise awareness of rights among women and girls to improve their access to justice and to provide psychosocial support for survivors of violence. Canada will also raise the importance of these issues through diplomatic channels and advocacy efforts.

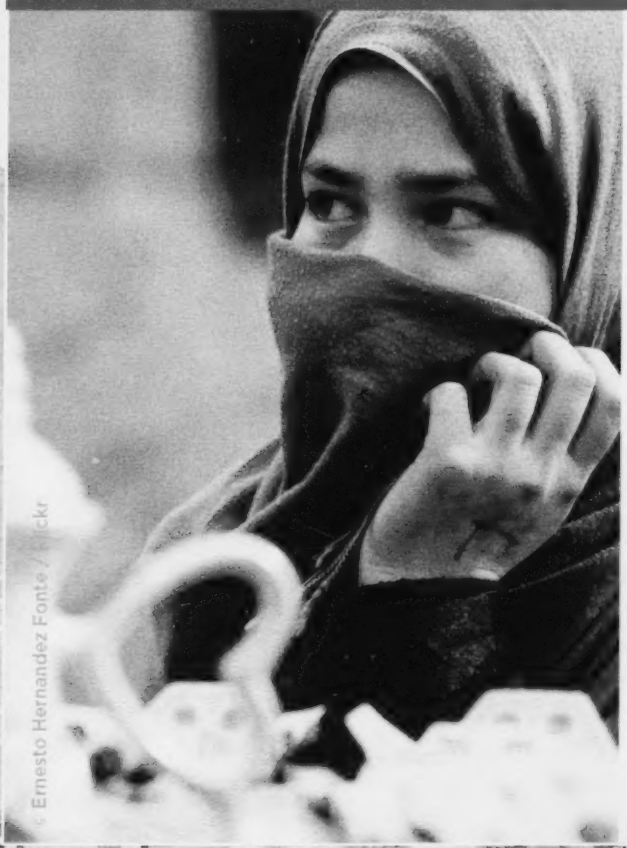
...provide better support for local women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights. These groups lead the way when it comes to pushing for gender equality but often lack the resources needed to provide the help women and girls need. Canada will support these organizations and movements, building their capacity so that they can better advocate for changes in policies, legislation and services and so that they can more effectively challenge harmful and discriminatory social beliefs and practices. **To support and expand this work, Canada is dedicating $150 million over five years to support local women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights in developing countries.**

...help governments in developing countries address the differential needs of women and men through policies and services. Governments have an important role to play in ensuring that women and girls have equal rights and opportunities to participate in the sustainable development of their societies. Canada will work with the governments of developing countries to improve their ability to deliver programs that support gender equality at all levels of government and in all sectors. This will be accomplished, for example, through programming and technical assistance.

...step up its commitment to evidence-based decision making. For the work of civil society, governments and donors to be most effective, it must rely on evidence and learning. Canada will strengthen the evidence-base by investing in policy research, better data collection and evaluation for gender equality. This will be done across all of Canada's international assistance efforts, and all of our partners will be expected to do the same.

OUR POLICY IN ACTION

EMPOWERING AFGHAN WOMEN



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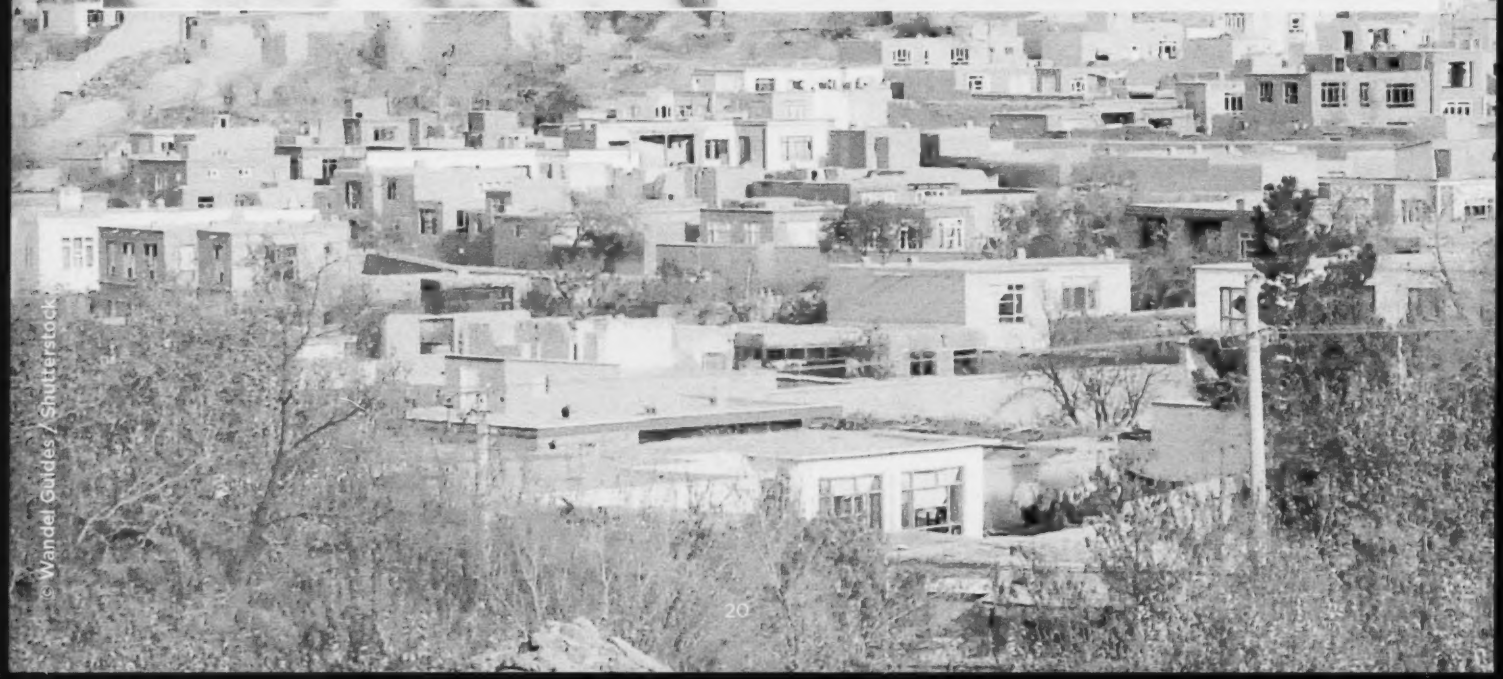
In 2009, Afghanistan enacted historic legislation on eliminating violence against women. But criminalizing violence is not enough to eliminate it.

An estimated 87 percent of Afghan women will be assaulted in their lifetimes. Domestic and sexual violence are still widespread, as is child, early and forced marriage. Sexual harassment remains common in public places, workplaces and schools. Cases are rarely reported to authorities.

Canada wants to help Afghan women assert their rights in these situations. Together with the government and civil society, we are working to ensure they receive equal treatment from public institutions, including the justice system.

We are working to raise awareness of the new law among stakeholders in the system. Training sessions for police



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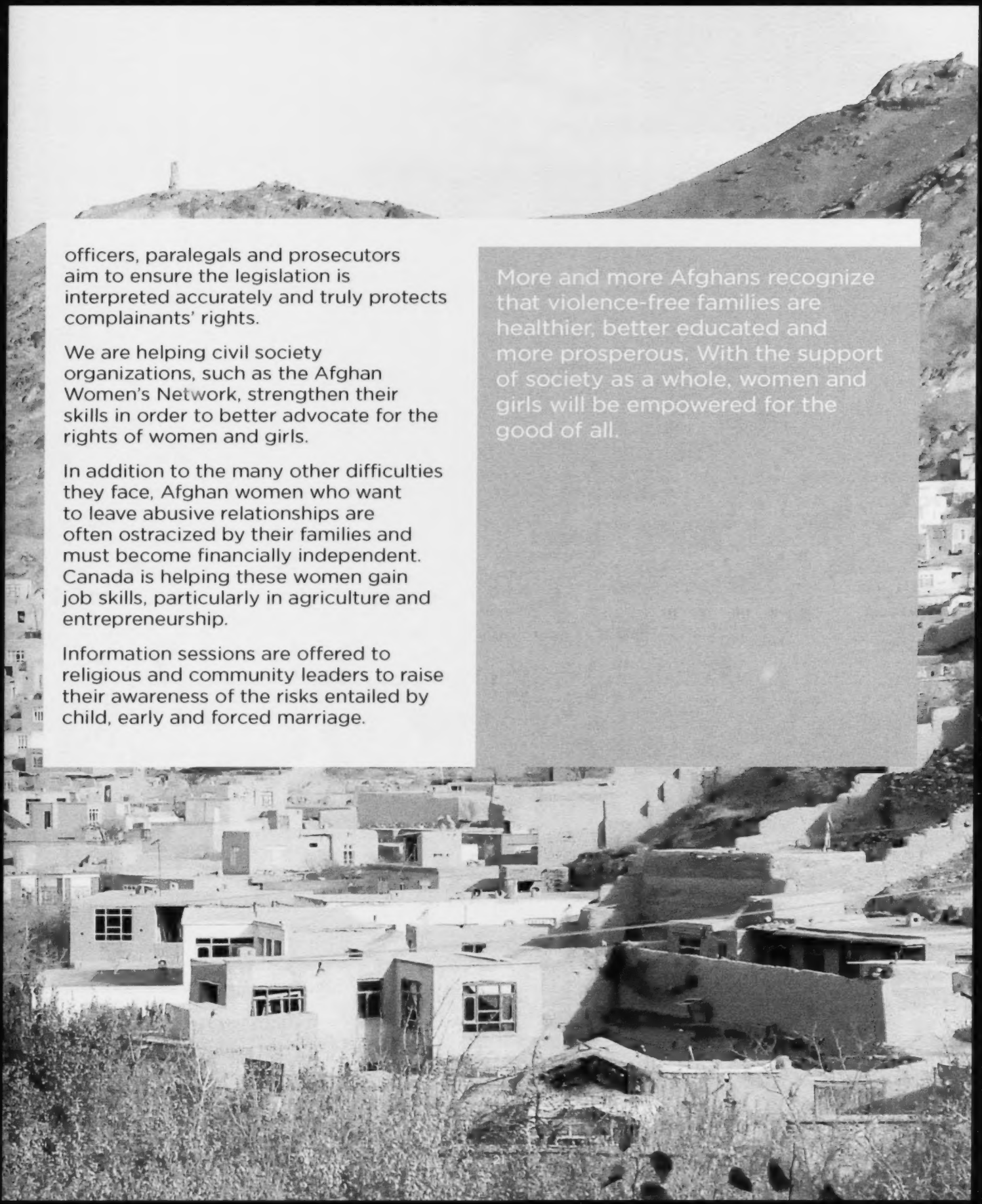


officers, paralegals and prosecutors aim to ensure the legislation is interpreted accurately and truly protects complainants' rights.

We are helping civil society organizations, such as the Afghan Women's Network, strengthen their skills in order to better advocate for the rights of women and girls.

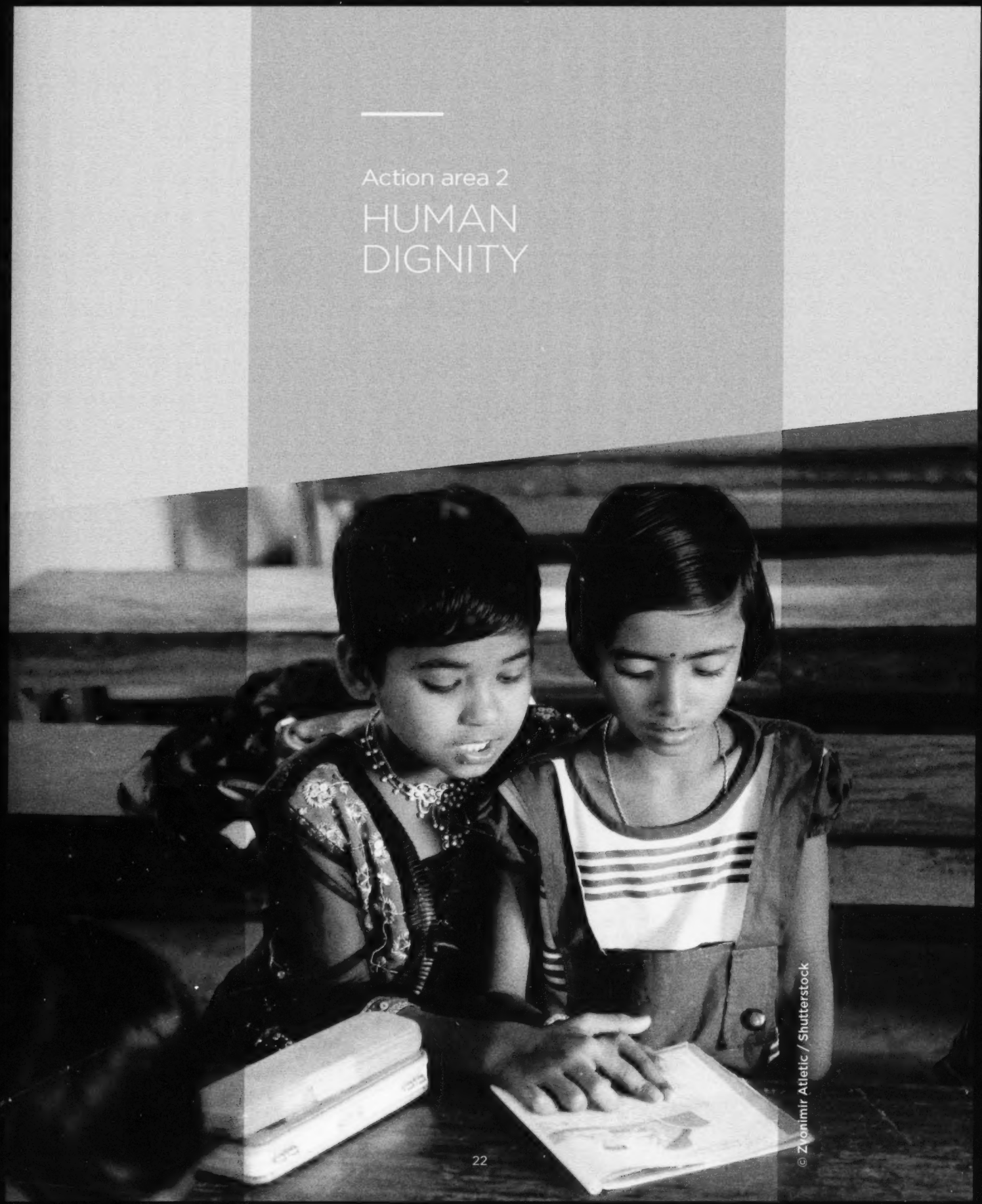
In addition to the many other difficulties they face, Afghan women who want to leave abusive relationships are often ostracized by their families and must become financially independent. Canada is helping these women gain job skills, particularly in agriculture and entrepreneurship.

Information sessions are offered to religious and community leaders to raise their awareness of the risks entailed by child, early and forced marriage.

More and more Afghans recognize that violence-free families are healthier, better educated and more prosperous. With the support of society as a whole, women and girls will be empowered for the good of all.

Action area 2

HUMAN DIGNITY



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Canada upholds human dignity in regions of the world where the poorest and most vulnerable populations have little or no access to essential services and where some populations have to deal with the devastating impact of armed conflict or natural catastrophe. Development initiatives and emergency humanitarian assistance provide health care, including sexual and reproductive care, as well as drinking water, nutritious food and quality education.

Health and nutrition

Significant progress has been made in increasing life expectancy and in reducing infant and child mortality rates and the number of malnourished children in developing countries.[22] The incidence of many infectious diseases has declined, thanks to better sanitation, better nutrition, drugs and vaccines.[23]

Not all parts of the world have witnessed this progress, however. While some countries have made impressive gains in health and nutrition, others have fallen behind or are at risk of slipping backwards, particularly those facing high levels of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, the destabilizing effects of climate change, economic hardship or conflict.

In many countries, a mix of discriminatory laws and policies, coupled with inadequate services and harmful cultural practices, limits the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls. The result is often a lack of comprehensive sexuality education and family planning services; restricted access to contraception and safe abortion; child, early and forced marriage; and female genital mutilation/cutting.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

CANADA IS **DOUBLING** ITS COMMITMENT **IN THE NEXT** 3 YEARS

Adolescent girls are particularly at risk for poor health when they are going through puberty and start menstruating. Many have an inadequate understanding of their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and many face sexual and gender-based violence.

Early pregnancy and motherhood present additional risks: complications in pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for adolescent girls in developing countries.[24] Exposure to sexually transmitted infections is another cause for concern. HIV is the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age in lower- and middle-income countries. In the hardest-hit countries, girls account for 80 percent of new HIV cases.

Moreover, women living with HIV are four to five times more likely to develop cervical cancer. Gender inequality greatly influences survival rates, since women who do not have equal access to health care have a 40-percent greater risk of dying from cervical cancer.

Women are more prone to nutritional deficiencies, especially when they are pregnant, breastfeeding or experiencing their adolescent growth spurt.[25] Gender-based discrimination in some societies means that women and girls eat least and eat last. As a result, they are twice as likely to suffer malnutrition as men and boys.[26]

Of the 5.9 million child deaths in 2015, nearly 45 percent were linked to malnutrition.[27] Children in sub-Saharan Africa are 14 times more likely to die before they reach the age of five than are children in developed countries.[28] Poor nutrition among pregnant women accounts for 800,000 newborn deaths annually.[29]

KEY FACTS

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- About 16 million girls aged 15 to 19 and 1 million girls under age 15 give birth every year—95 percent of them in developing countries.[30]
- 99 percent of maternal deaths occur in developing countries.[31]
- 225 million women worldwide do not have access to contraception. If they did, 52 million unintended pregnancies could be prevented each year.[32]
- Every year, some 3 million girls aged 15 to 19 undergo unsafe abortions.[33]
- Smaller families make it easier for women to participate in the workforce, which provides financial support and guards against poverty. For every additional child born to women aged 25 to 39, labour participation drops by 10 to 15 percent.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, women comprise 56 percent of new cases of HIV/AIDS infections among adults (15 and older), and the proportion is higher among young women aged 15 to 24.[34]
- HIV prevalence among young women (aged 15 to 24) is more than twice as high as young men in sub-Saharan Africa.[35]
- Cervical cancer kills more than 260,000 women worldwide each year; of those deaths, nearly 90 percent are in developing countries.
- 60 percent of the world's 800 million undernourished people are women and girls.[36]

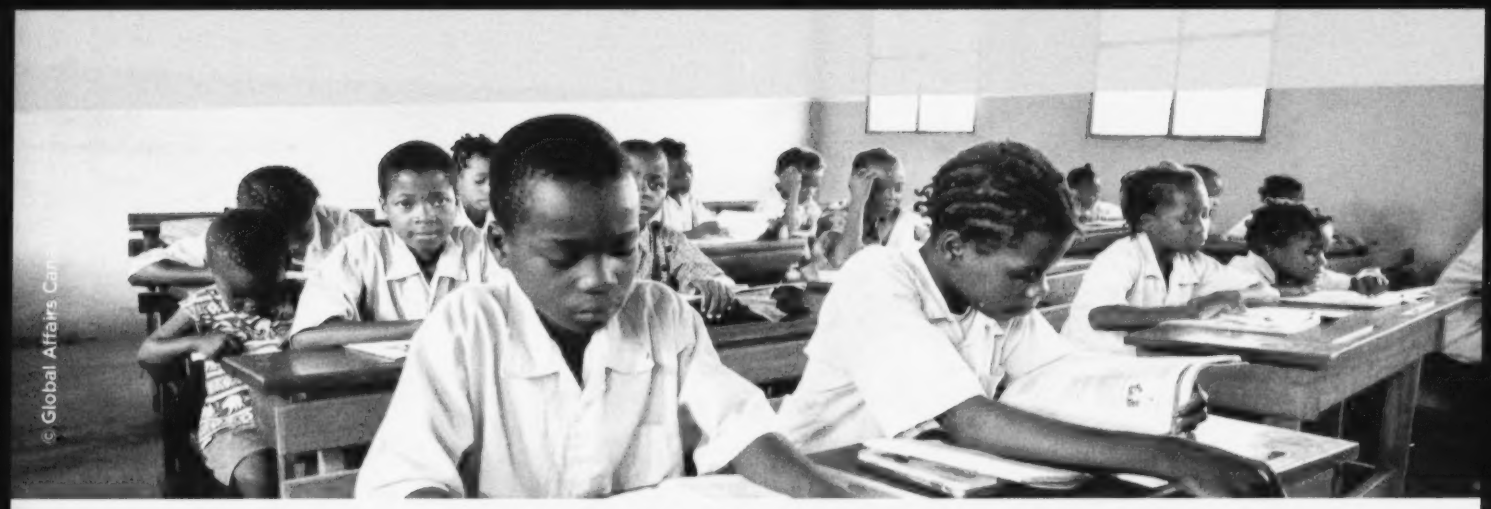
TO BETTER SUPPORT POSITIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, CANADA WILL...

...work to close persistent gaps in sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls. To achieve this goal, Canada will support increased access to a full range of health services, including family planning and modern contraception; comprehensive sexuality education; safe and legal abortion, and post-abortion care; and prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. **This work will be supported by an investment of $650 million over three years.**

...join global partnerships that promote sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls. Over the next three years, initiatives such as Family Planning 2020 and the Ouagadougou Partnership will make it possible for 120 million more women and girls in West and Central Africa to use family planning.

...focus its efforts on programs and projects that put gender at the heart of their efforts to improve health care. These include initiatives that help fight infectious diseases through equity-based approaches and a focus on diseases, such as HIV, that particularly affect women and girls, that empower community health care workers (most of whom are women) and that address the ongoing challenge of sexual and gender-based violence.

...make it easier for women, girls and all young children to access nutritious foods and supplements. To reduce the prevalence of anemia among women and adolescent girls and improve birth outcomes, Canada will leverage its investments to increase the provision of micronutrient supplements, including iron and folic acid. Canada will use its participation in international working groups such as the Scaling Up Nutrition movement to advocate for the importance of more gender-responsive nutrition policies.

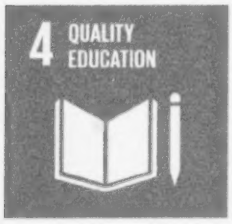


Canada's investments will help improve the quality of health and nutrition services for the poorest and most vulnerable—including ongoing efforts to fight infectious diseases such as polio, AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria—and help make these services more accessible.

To support maternal, newborn and child health, Canada will follow through on its 2015 to 2020 commitment to invest $3.5 billion in programs that strengthen health and data systems, improve nutrition and combat infectious diseases.

Evidence shows, however, that these investments are not enough to ensure the best outcomes for women and children and to achieve SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). A plan to reduce the mortality of women and children must also include investments that support sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls.

Education



Today, the world is home to more young people between the ages of 10 and 24 (1.8 billion) than at any other time in history.[37] Yet 250 million girls and boys are still unable to read, write or count, even after four years of schooling.[38]

Evidence shows that when girls are given early access to education and are supported in their studies, they are more likely to graduate, improving their future earning potential. Benefits for the communities in which they live are also undeniable: a one percentage point increase in female education raises the average gross domestic product (GDP) by 0.3 percentage points and raises annual GDP growth rates by 0.2 percentage points. In short, educated girls are empowered girls. And empowered girls and women are key to making greater gains in sustainable development.

KEY FACTS
EDUCATION

- Every additional year of schooling for girls and boys increases GDP by 0.37 percent.[39]
- Every additional year of secondary school increases a girl's future earnings by 10 to 20 percent.[40]
- In developing countries, girls who have completed seven years of schooling will, on average, marry four years later and have, on average, two fewer children.[41] Later marriage and smaller families make it easier for women to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

TO BETTER SUPPORT EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND ACHIEVE SDG 4 (QUALITY EDUCATION), CANADA WILL...

...support programs and advocacy efforts that help women and girls get the skills training and education they need to succeed. Giving women and girls more opportunities to complete training and education makes it easier for them to find decent work and reach their full potential. To support these efforts, Canada will also actively promote awareness of the benefits of education for women and girls at every opportunity and of the need for curricula free of gender stereotypes, including at international forums, bilateral talks and informal meetings.

...work to ensure that school facilities are welcoming spaces that respond to the specific needs of girls. Canada will ensure that investments in education include provisions for separate and appropriate washroom facilities, as well as systems to help manage menstrual hygiene, and that support is given to programs that help prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence.

...support programs and partners that help those who have missed out on the opportunity to complete a quality education. Not all young people are able to finish school, which puts them at a disadvantage—not only are they missing critical knowledge and skills needed to face life's challenges, they are likely to find it more difficult to find and keep decent work. To improve opportunities for these young people, Canada will support programs and partners that provide life skills, and technical and vocational education and training, with an emphasis on assisting women and marginalized youth find work, including in non-traditional and better-paying fields.

The world's poorest girls are the least able to use education as a means to break the cycle of poverty. They are less likely than boys to enrol in school and complete their education, owing to a variety of barriers to their participation, such as limited societal support for girls' education; societal expectations that they should stay home to complete domestic chores; child, early and forced marriage and early pregnancy and motherhood; sexual and gender-based violence around schools; and inadequate infrastructure (for example, separate toilets and access to sanitary products).

Where the world's displaced people are being hosted

Source: UNHCR

Low levels of education among girls and boys are also associated with limited access to sexual and reproductive health information. This means that less-educated girls and boys are more vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections and other reproductive health issues.

Gender-responsive humanitarian action

While conflicts between states have declined dramatically in the past 50 years, conflicts within states—frequently involving non-state actors—are on the rise.[42] The result is human displacement (65.3 million displaced persons in 2015) on a scale not seen since the aftermath of the Second World War.[43]

In conflict-affected countries, protracted displacement has left millions of people with few opportunities, limited access to services and an uncertain future. The average length of time people are displaced is now close to 20 years, up from nine years in the 1990s.[44]

Rapid forced displacement—which can also occur as a result of natural disasters—puts a tremendous strain on those communities and countries that receive displaced citizens. Five of the top 10 refugee-hosting countries are located in sub-Saharan Africa,

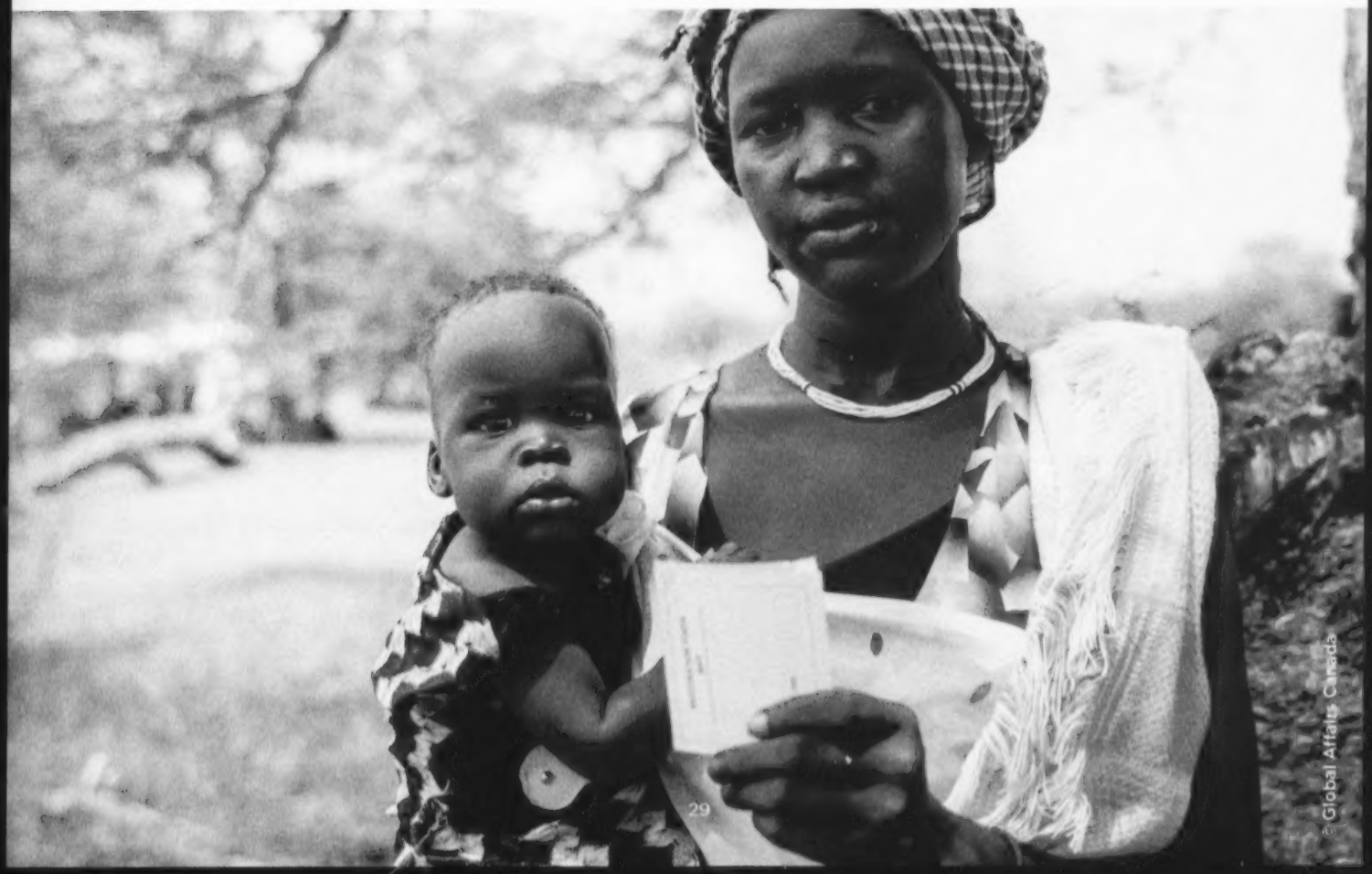
where the capacity to provide adequate public goods and services is already limited.[45] Driven mostly by large-scale displacements, the United Nations' global humanitarian appeal has grown nearly 10-fold in just 25 years, rising from $2.7 billion in 1992 to $22.2 billion in 2017.[46]

At the first World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, the international community committed to a change in how humanitarian assistance is provided. For its part, Canada committed to providing more flexible and predictable funding in response to humanitarian crises, including the use of unearmarked and multi-year funding for longer-term crises.

When humanitarian crises hit, women and girls shoulder a heavier burden of care for both families and the community at large. Women and girls are also at higher risk for abuse, exploitation and violence—including sexual violence—with little protection and limited legal recourse. It is estimated that one in five refugees or displaced women have experienced sexual violence, and given the barriers to reporting, this figure is likely to be an underestimation.

Because of the specific risks that humanitarian crises create for women and girls, Canada also commits to increase its support for women and girls in its humanitarian response efforts and for local groups providing emergency assistance, including local women's organizations.

Women and girls have the potential to be powerful agents of change in crisis situations. They are often uniquely positioned to take on leadership roles, determine priorities and influence more effective humanitarian responses. When women and girls are included in the planning and implementation of humanitarian responses, it improves humanitarian outcomes overall. These efforts also prepare women to lead post-crisis recovery and reconstruction.



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KEY FACTS

HUMANITARIAN ACTION

- Pregnancy and childbirth are particularly dangerous for women and girls during humanitarian crises. It is estimated that under these conditions, 500 women and girls die every day from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth.[47]
- A study in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake found the pregnancy rate was three times higher in camps for internally displaced people compared to the average urban pregnancy rate before the crisis. Approximately two thirds of these pregnancies were unwanted or unplanned.[48]
- When it comes to food distribution during humanitarian crises, it has been shown that giving women and girls priority access to food helps to deliver better nutrition and reduce the incidence of hunger.[49]

As one example, in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, women played a central role in the recovery and reconstruction process, helping to guide the shelter recovery program and making important decisions about their homes (traditionally the purview of men). With support from Canada, women in the community worked closely with male carpenters to prioritize assistance to women and vulnerable groups and to ensure that recipients of assistance were included in repair and reconstruction decision making. Local women reported feeling especially empowered by information they were given on how to make their homes safer in the future.

Canada is recognized as a leader in providing humanitarian assistance to those affected by conflicts and by natural disasters and will continue to support timely humanitarian action, based on humanitarian principles and on needs, to save lives, alleviate suffering and support the dignity of those affected.

Building on the existing global frameworks and guidelines for humanitarian action, Canada will require its humanitarian partners to invest in and report on gender data and analysis. This will make it possible to deliver more effective responses to humanitarian crises, while taking into account—and responding to—the unique needs of women and girls.

TO PROVIDE BETTER SUPPORT TO THOSE IN NEED DURING HUMANITARIAN CRISES AND TO BETTER ADDRESS THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS, CANADA WILL...

...strengthen sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response strategies in humanitarian settings. Canada will dedicate a portion of its humanitarian assistance funding to providing counselling and psychosocial support to those in need. Canada will also increase its leadership in the Global Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies, to take stronger measures to keep people safe and help survivors rebuild their lives.

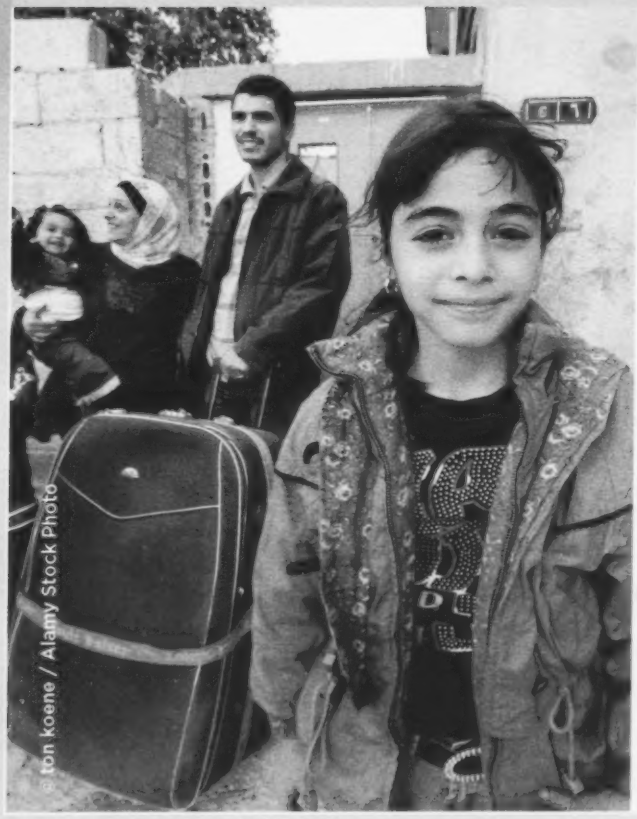
...advocate for humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law, including by shining a light on the ways in which humanitarian crises present unique challenges for women and girls. To ensure that the needs of women and girls are better understood and responded to, and that humanitarian assistance reaches those who need it most, Canada will strongly promote the use of gender- and age-disaggregated data by humanitarian partners. Canada will also continue to defend unfettered and safe access for humanitarian workers.

...support the full range of women and girls' sexual and reproductive health needs during humanitarian responses. This is important, as the needs of women and girls are often overlooked during humanitarian crises, putting women and adolescent girls at a greater risk of life-threatening complications. Canada will ensure that its humanitarian funding includes provisions for supporting women and girls' sexual and reproductive health needs and will raise the importance of this kind of targeted assistance with international partners and at international events in the humanitarian system.

...help strengthen the capacity of local and national women's groups to assist in humanitarian emergencies and help address the particular unmet needs of women. Local actors play a critical role in responding quickly to emergencies and in supporting the ongoing recovery of communities. Canada will work with local and national women's groups to involve women and girls in program design, delivery and monitoring of humanitarian initiatives.

OUR POLICY IN ACTION

HUMAN DIGNITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS



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The hostilities in Iraq have led to the forced displacement of more than 4.7 million people. The conflict has been marked by serious violations of international humanitarian law, including sexual violence.

Thousands of women and girls—particularly from the Yazidi minority—have been abducted and have suffered unimaginable horrors at the hands of Daesh. Those who escape must overcome serious injuries and trauma.

With Canada's help, 29 community centres set up in refugee camps and communities in Kurdistan and other regions are meeting the urgent needs of thousands of women and girls every year.

At the centres, survivors of sexual violence receive emergency care from

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gynecologists and mental health specialists. They get clothing and hygiene items. They have access to reserved areas, where therapeutic activities help them overcome their physical and psychological wounds. Their children can play in safe areas.

The workers at these centres also help the women reintegrate into their families and communities. Their return is difficult, especially when they are pregnant or are bringing with them children born during captivity. But with the cooperation of Yazidi religious authorities, who encourage people to accept them, many survivors have been reintegrated in their communities.

For some, it is the start of healing. For others, more must be done.

Cases of serious sexual abuse, 90 percent of which have been committed against Yazidi women, are referred to a new, specialized centre in the city of Duhok. There, enhanced services are available, including psychiatric care and legal assistance.

Action area 3

GROWTH THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE

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Canada supports women and girls to ensure they develop their skills, accede to decision-making positions and fully take part in the economic growth of their communities, including by supporting technical and vocational training and entrepreneurship. Canada also promotes social inclusion, labour rights, the right to own property and access to financing for women.

Inclusive growth is growth that works for everyone (SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth). It cannot be achieved without the full and equal participation of women as economic actors. This means giving women more opportunities to succeed and greater control over household resources and decision making, as well as reducing their heavy burden of unpaid work, including child care.

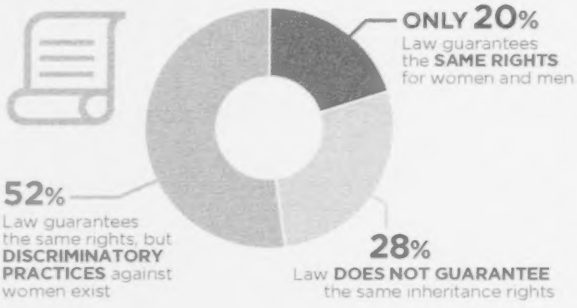
Empowering women to be full participants in the economic lives of their families and communities can lead to broader economic growth and lasting change. Over the last 25 years, economic growth has helped lift more than 1 billion people in the developing world out of extreme poverty.[50]

When women are able to develop their full economic potential—whether as agricultural producers, employees, entrepreneurs or business leaders—economies thrive and the benefits of growth reach more people.

At the household level, economically empowered women gain economic independence and raise healthier and better-educated children.[51] Compared to men, they spend a greater portion of their incomes on their families.[52]

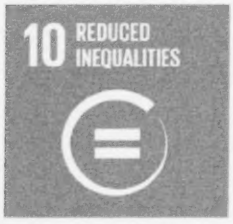
An important part of making sure that women and girls are able to take full advantage of economic opportunities involves giving them control over their own sexual and reproductive health choices so that they can decide if, when and with whom to start a family, or grow their families.

Existing statutory and customary laws restrict women's access to assets


ONLY 20%
Law guarantees the SAME RIGHTS for women and men
52%
Law guarantees the same rights, but DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES against women exist
28%
Law DOES NOT GUARANTEE the same inheritance rights

Source: UN Statistics Division

For women to participate equally in contributing to economic growth, they must also have greater access to and control over assets such as land, housing and capital, as well as labour rights and social protections from precarious work situations.[53] Limited access to financial services—such as banking, credit and insurance—makes it difficult for poor households to recover from events such as a poor harvest or a health crisis. This limited access to vital financial services also results in lost economic opportunities, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises owned by women.[54]



Finally, gender equality can deliver benefits for the private sector, which is responsible for creating nine out of 10 jobs in developing and emerging countries.[55] When businesses address implicit bias and unsafe working conditions, when they ensure equal pay and provide family-friendly policies and flexible work options for women employees, and when they allow increased participation of women in business decision making, productivity improves.

Businesses also benefit when they integrate women and woman-owned enterprises into their supply chains. More than one in three private-sector leaders report increased profits following efforts to empower women in emerging markets.

Canada recognizes the importance of the full participation of women in economic decision making and is committed to helping improve opportunities for women. This includes assistance for rural women in the area of climate-smart agriculture and support for initiatives that deliver technical and vocational training and encourage women's entrepreneurship. In addition, Canada will work to support greater financial inclusion, better access to good, well-paying work, and enhanced labour and property rights for women. Canada is also prepared to help local governments develop the policy reforms needed to address issues such as unpaid work and care.

KEY FACTS

GROWTH THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE

- 77 countries maintain restrictions on the types of work that women can do, limiting women's ability to contribute to the economic success of their families and communities.[56]
- Globally, only 50 percent of the world's working-age women participate in the formal labour force, compared to 75 percent of working-age men.[57]
- One in three married women in developing countries have no control over major household purchases, such as agricultural land, livestock and home improvements.[58] This makes it difficult for women to influence how family resources are used, and limits their ability to leverage family assets for the purpose of securing loans or other financial tools.
- In developing countries, women spend more than three times as much time on unpaid care work than men (4 hours and 30 minutes per day for women, compared to 1 hour and 20 minutes per day for men).[59]

TO HELP MORE WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES REALIZE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR OWN ECONOMIC SUCCESS AND THE ECONOMIC SUCCESS OF THEIR COMMUNITIES, CANADA WILL...

...focus its international assistance more on increasing economic leadership and empowerment of women at all levels. Growth that works for everyone is impossible to achieve when half the population is excluded from economic decision making. Including women in the economic decisions that shape their households and their communities empowers them, sets a positive example for girls and boys and delivers better results for families and communities. In addition to its own efforts, Canada will promote the importance of women's economic participation at high-level forums and other international gatherings.

...help improve economic opportunities and the resilience of rural women. Canada will help to improve women's incomes and productivity through greater adoption of climate-smart methods of food production. We will support local woman-led agricultural businesses, including local women's cooperatives and associations, which are best placed to support food security and economic sustainability at the local level. We will help them to scale up their business activities and expand their impact on local economies.

...promote greater financial inclusion for women, and equal access to capital, markets, digital technology and business development services. Women face various forms of financial discrimination that limit their ability to take advantage of market opportunities—limitations that can be overcome with targeted initiatives that improve access to and awareness of these services. In addition, we will encourage lending to woman entrepreneurs through Canada's Development Finance Institute.

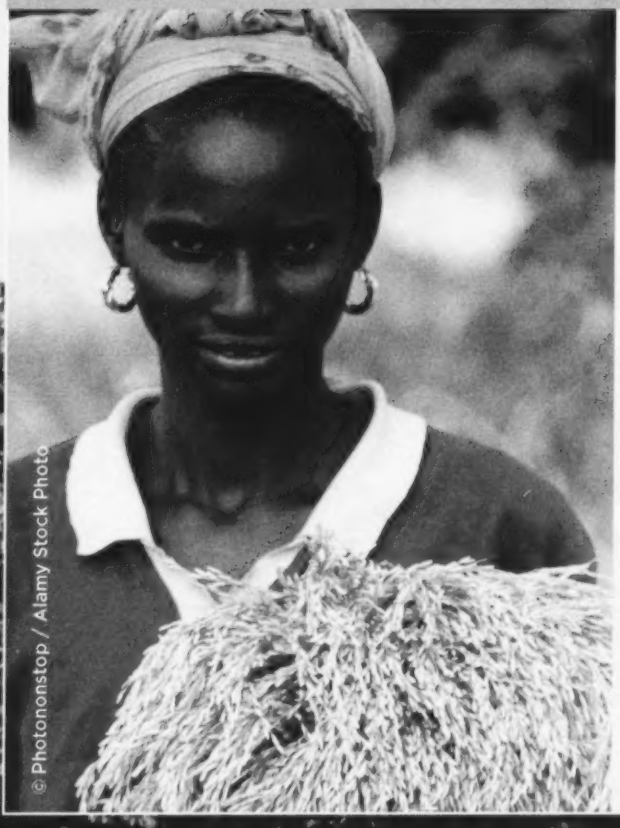
...promote women's economic rights and access to decent work. This includes promoting labour, land, inheritance and property rights for women by supporting the reform of restrictive laws and regulations. Canada will ensure that its economic programming addresses these root causes of women's economic marginalization and exclusion and promotes access to employment, in line with international labour standards.

...support technical and vocational training for women. Many women and girls find themselves relegated to education streams that lead to low-growth, low-status and low-paying employment. Canada will support training that opens up new opportunities, encourages greater entrepreneurship and gives women the financial literacy they need to succeed.

...help address unpaid work and the disproportionate burden of care shouldered by women. Women and girls continue to perform the vast majority of care-related work, which can lead to lower incomes and limited economic opportunities. To address these challenges, Canada will support policy reforms, improved social protection and shared responsibility for domestic and care work.

OUR POLICY IN ACTION

SENEGALESE WOMEN MAKE GREAT STRIDES



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Women make up more than two thirds of the agricultural workforce in Senegal and are responsible for over 80 percent of food production. However, they have limited access to land and to adapted technologies and are more affected by poverty and malnutrition.

Women's workload in the home limits their ability to pursue money-making activities like beekeeping. But in Saré Souma, a village in Casamance, a women's advocacy organization has taken up this challenge.

With Canada's support, the women obtained innovative hives, specialized equipment and a fully equipped well.

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They learned new honey harvesting and processing techniques. They were also trained in leadership and in administrative and financial management.

Their hard work and tenacity have made their region a centre of honey production in Senegal.

Buoyed by success, the women have expanded the project to include mangos, cashews and forest fruits. In all, 4,560 women have gained knowledge that lets them use better-performing, forest-friendly agricultural technologies, such as improved dryers and alternative fuels.

In just a few years, the woman farmers in Casamance have diversified and increased their production and income.

Some have created jobs, put their children through school and acquired better-built houses. In Saré Souma, women financed the rehabilitation of the communal well and bought desks for the school.

Besides the greater financial autonomy their business success has given them, these women have acquired a more equal social position in their families and communities. They are now active within regional agri-food organizations and municipal politics.

Action area 4

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

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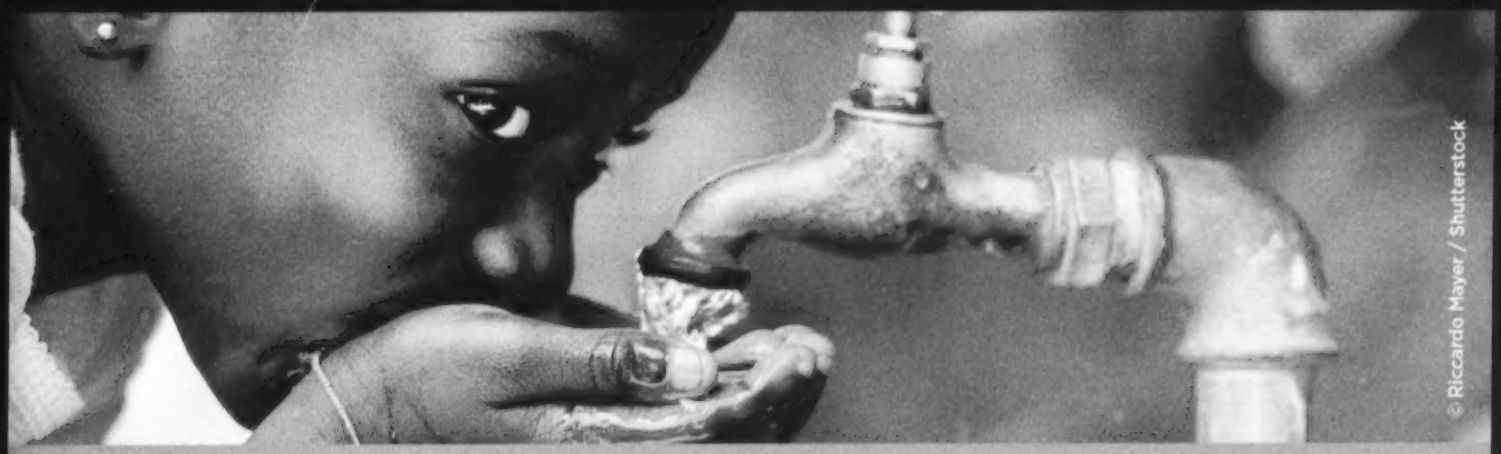

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Canada is committed to helping the most vulnerable communities adapt to climate change, mitigate its impacts and, by leveraging private-sector investment, facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy. Canada supports women in order to increase the resilience of their crops and their access to water and other natural resources, as well as their participation in environmental decision making and in the renewable energy sector.

Communities around the world, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, are experiencing the destabilizing effects of climate change in dramatic and costly ways. With climate change comes a wide range of challenges: rising sea levels, floods, heat waves, droughts, desertification, water shortages and the spread of tropical and vector-borne diseases (diseases transmitted by one living organism to another, such as through a mosquito bite).

Women and girls are particularly at risk when it comes to these threats. The scarcity of resources in the wake of these challenges—in particular, the lack of clean drinking water—coupled with a gender-based imbalance in household responsibilities, means that climate change has a disproportionate impact on women and girls at the household level.[60]

Women and girls are often the primary producers of food and providers of water, heating and cooking fuel for their households.[61] When these resources become more unpredictable and scarce due to, for example, extreme weather, women and girls have to spend more time and effort attending to basic needs, such as growing food and collecting water and fuel.[62]

Canada recognizes the importance of addressing water issues, including sustainable access to clean water, adequate sanitation and proper hygiene, and integrated water resource management. These are vital issues for millions around the world that affect every action area of the new Feminist International Assistance Policy. As water scarcity can be a source of tension and conflict, tackling water challenges is also important for our actions on peace and security.

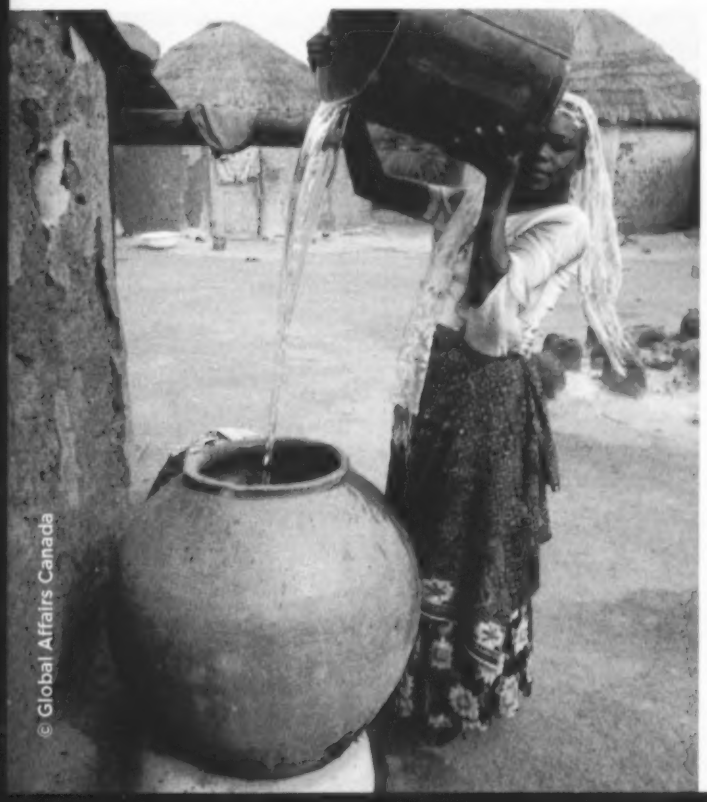
$2.65 **BILLION** **TO SUPPORT** MOST VULNERABLE COUNTRIES to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change by **2020-2021**

© Mohd Zaki Shamsudin / Shutterstock

Women often do not have sufficient funds to cover weather-related losses, nor do they have equal access to technologies that can help families and communities adapt to climate change.

When women and girls have better access to climate-resilient resources and technologies, they are able to devote more time to the activities—such as education, paid work, political and public participation, and leisure activities—that enhance the quality of life for entire communities.

It is especially important—as individuals with a vested interest in mitigating the effects of climate change—that women and girls be given an active role in designing and developing strategic responses to climate change.



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Canada is committed to combatting climate change and its impacts (SDG 13: Climate Action). That is why Canada is providing $2.65 billion in climate finance to help the most vulnerable countries adapt to and mitigate climate change and make the transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient economies.

KEY FACTS

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

- In a single day in 25 sub-Saharan African countries, women spend a combined 16 million hours collecting water for their families.[63]
- Girls in households that cook with fuels that generate carbon pollution (including wood, dung and wood charcoal) were found to spend an average of 18 hours a week gathering fuel, compared to just five hours a week in those households that use cleaner fuels, such as biogas, ethanol or electricity generated from renewables like wind and solar.[64]
- Without action on climate change, 100 million people could be forced into poverty by 2030.
- Inaction on climate change would have a cumulative economic effect; the potential cumulative loss in global GDP is estimated at up to $72 trillion by 2060.[65]

RECOGNIZING THAT WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE UNIQUELY AFFECTED BY THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, CANADA WILL...

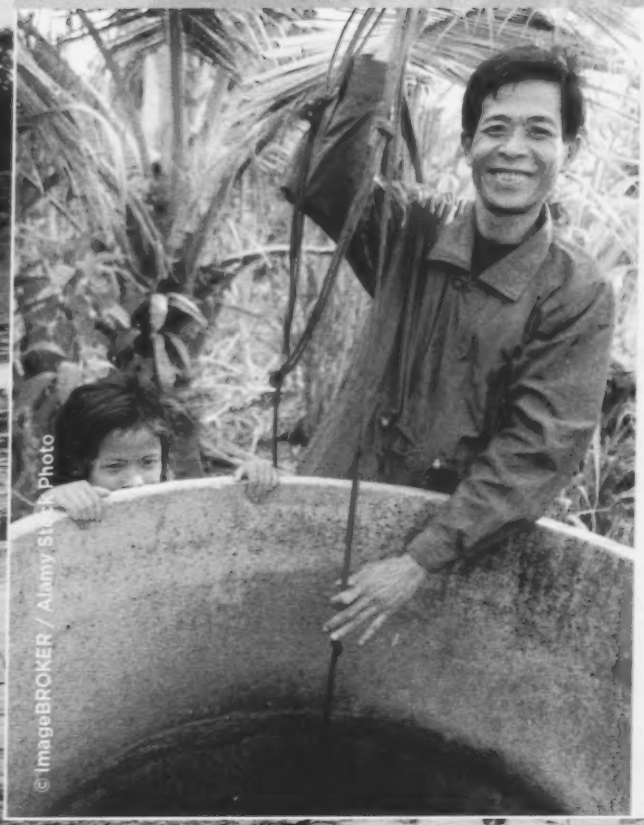
...support women's leadership and decision making in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, resilience-building and sustainable natural resource management. To achieve this, Canada will require that women participate actively in the design and implementation of any climate adaptation or mitigation initiatives that are funded wholly or in part by the Government of Canada.

...ensure that the government's climate-related planning, policy-making and financing acknowledge the particular challenges faced by women and girls. This lens will be applied to all climate change mitigation and adaption initiatives, including those developed through partnerships with local governments, civil society, the private sector and financial institutions.

...support employment and business opportunities for women in the renewable energy sector. In many developing countries, energy is the primary responsibility of women and girls, especially in rural areas. Canada will support greater use of renewable energy, create opportunities for women within that sector, and help ensure that climate financing is equally accessible to woman-led initiatives and enterprises. This will be accomplished through programming that gives woman entrepreneurs greater access to information on and services related to renewable energy opportunities.

OUR POLICY IN ACTION

HARVESTING RAINWATER IN CAMBODIA



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Climate change is increasing water scarcity—particularly in Cambodia, hit hard by drought. In periods of shortage, unequal access to water is a source of conflict between women and men. While women use water mostly in the household, men use it to generate income through cash crops and livestock.

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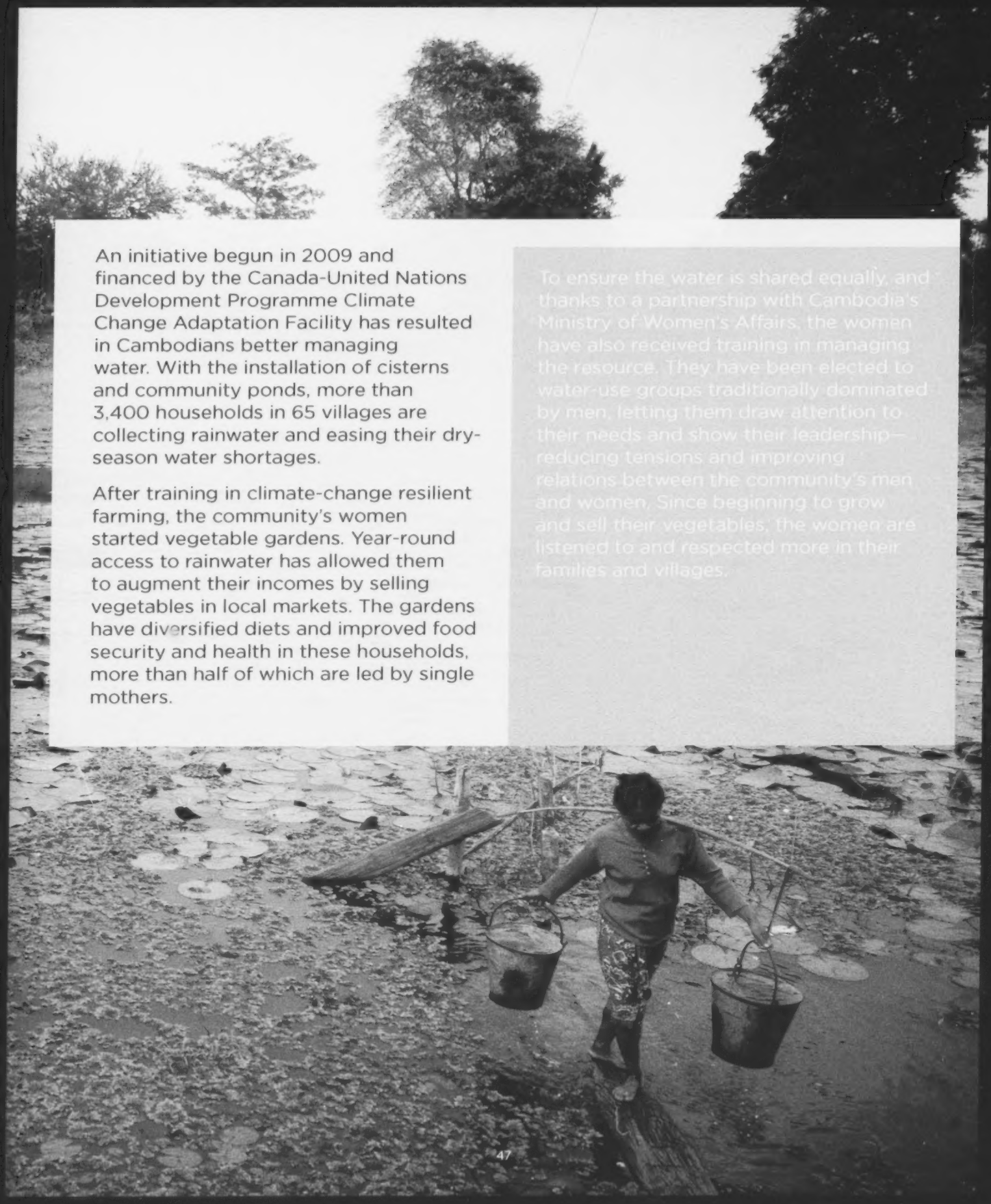

An initiative begun in 2009 and financed by the Canada-United Nations Development Programme Climate Change Adaptation Facility has resulted in Cambodians better managing water. With the installation of cisterns and community ponds, more than 3,400 households in 65 villages are collecting rainwater and easing their dry-season water shortages.

After training in climate-change resilient farming, the community's women started vegetable gardens. Year-round access to rainwater has allowed them to augment their incomes by selling vegetables in local markets. The gardens have diversified diets and improved food security and health in these households, more than half of which are led by single mothers.

To ensure the water is shared equally, and thanks to a partnership with Cambodia's Ministry of Women's Affairs, the women have also received training in managing the resource. They have been elected to water-use groups traditionally dominated by men, letting them draw attention to their needs and show their leadership—reducing tensions and improving relations between the community's men and women. Since beginning to grow and sell their vegetables, the women are listened to and respected more in their families and villages.

Action area 5

INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

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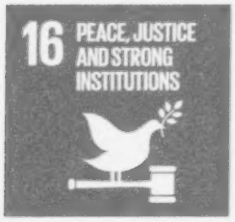
Canada firmly believes that democracy, responsible governance, peaceful pluralism and human rights are crucially important to peace and development. Canada supports inclusive governance by investing in the rights of women, their participation in politics, their legal authority and their access to justice, as well as by helping create an enabling environment for civil society.



In the same way that inclusive growth is growth that works for everyone, inclusive governance is governance that effectively serves and engages all citizens, irrespective of gender or other facets of personal identity. Inclusive governance is essential to achieving SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Issues surrounding governance can be complex and are deeply rooted in the society in which citizens live. The policies, laws, procedures, norms, beliefs, practices and attitudes that support gender inequality can be difficult to challenge and to change.

For this reason, those seeking to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls must give special attention to the way that human rights, the rule of law and political participation intersect.

Human rights

Women's rights are human rights and are universal—meaning that the same rights that are extended to men must be extended to women, without exception.

Despite the global adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1979, discrimination and ingrained social biases against women and girls continue to limit their participation and advancement in the economic, social and political spheres. Women often face additional intersectional discrimination, including on the basis of their race, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, or migrant or refugee status, among other aspects of personal identity.

Canada will allocate
$150 MILLION
over 5 years in support of
GRASSROOTS WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

© Jake Lyell / Alamy Stock Photo

Women also experience disproportionate levels of violence, exploitation and abuse. Sexual and gender-based violence is one of the most widespread abuses of human rights worldwide, and its prevalence makes it an obstacle to peace and development.[66] Many countries fail to investigate and prosecute sexual and gender-based crimes effectively, and offer limited support for women and girls who are survivors of human rights abuses.[67]

Rule of law

Discrimination against women and girls often extends beyond societal norms and practices and is enshrined in policies and laws.[68] True gender equality and the lasting empowerment of women and girls will not be possible until women have full and equal protection under the law. This includes equal rights related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, property and land ownership.

Reform of the judicial system is also required to ensure that women and girls have equal access to justice, including equal protection of their rights by state institutions such as the police, prosecutors, judges and courts. In particular, special measures may be needed to protect and support women's rights defenders who are subject to ongoing intimidation, violence and abuse.

True justice for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence cannot be achieved when perpetrators are not held to account. Governments—and in particular, police and judicial systems—need greater capacity to strengthen laws and services so that perpetrators can be held fully accountable for sexual crimes.

Democracy and political participation

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2015, the most persistent gender gaps exist in political participation. Women face a double hurdle: not only are there significant barriers to attaining leadership positions, once they are secured, women are likely to find it difficult to exert real influence in those roles.

Women are often subjected to discriminatory laws and negative attitudes and stereotypes that discourage or limit their political participation.[69] In addition, fighting for the political rights of women in the public sphere often invites intimidation and violence.[70]

While the percentage of woman parliamentarians around the world has nearly doubled in the last two decades, few women are able to crack that highest glass ceiling, and only a small number of women hold roles as heads of state and government.[71]

Despite their low numbers, woman political leaders at all levels play an important role in helping to break down the barriers that prevent women and girls from succeeding in all areas of life—not just in the political realm.[72] As role models, they help transform attitudes toward women in society and in the home, and their presence in government also leads to better decision making. Having women and girls as full participants in public life, in the business world and in government leads to better decision making that improves the quality of life for all citizens.

For their part, governments also benefit when they provide proper legal protection and reform discriminatory laws and regulations that limit the full and equal participation of women in the workforce. By developing public-sector management and procurement practices that are responsive to woman employees and woman-owned businesses, governments can encourage both greater economic participation of women and stronger economic growth.

KEY FACTS

INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

- In 2015, barely more than a fifth (22 percent) of the world's parliamentarians were women.[73]
- Also in 2015, 17 percent of government ministers were women.[74]

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TO SUPPORT GOVERNANCE THAT BETTER SERVES ALL CITIZENS, RESPECTS HUMAN RIGHTS, STRENGTHENS THE RULE OF LAW AND ENCOURAGES GREATER POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN AND GIRLS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, CANADA WILL...

...help advance women's leadership and decision making in governance and public sector management at all levels. Supporting woman politicians in implementing gender-sensitive reforms and legislation will ensure that the interests of more marginalized groups—including women—are included when making governance decisions. Canada will support greater political participation by women, including young and marginalized women, through training programs for woman candidates and through support for gender-sensitive civic education.

...help strengthen legal systems and promote reforms that eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls. To accomplish this, Canada will support advocacy and programming that address discriminatory laws that prevent women from realizing their economic, political and social rights.

...improve access to justice for women and girls. Women and girls deserve full access to justice and equal protection under the law. Canada will support initiatives that help women better understand their legal rights and improve their access to justice because failure to prosecute violent crimes perpetrated against women and girls amounts to a denial of justice. Canada will also help increase the capacity of governments—notably police and judicial systems—to strengthen laws and services and better hold to account perpetrators of sexual and gender-based crimes.

...support the protection of women's human rights defenders. These defenders are often subjected to violence, intimidation and threats to their lives. Canada will listen to their concerns and advocate for their safety and security, as well as their ability to continue their vital work in support of greater gender equality.

...support the efforts and capacity of governments at all levels to ensure public services respond better to the needs and potential of women and girls. Canada will help governments and public servants to collect and analyze disaggregated data and evidence to support better decision making and will help to design and implement initiatives that address the differential needs and opportunities of women and girls, including through gender budgeting. Canada will also help governments at all levels (national, state or provincial, and municipal) to effectively engage women and girls in decision making, including over resources.

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OUR POLICY IN ACTION

MORE WOMEN IN POWER

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In the Middle East and North Africa, more women than men attend university. Yet their participation in the labour market is less than half the world average. They hold only 18 percent of parliamentary seats. Few women rise to positions of influence where they can participate in decisions that most affect the lives of women and girls.

In politics, woman representatives are catalysts of change. The leadership of women sparks reforms that benefit everyone: health and sanitation services, gender equality laws, parental leave and elimination of sexual and gender-based violence.

Canada wants to help equip women in Arab countries for more active roles in

© Leif Stenberg / Shutterstock

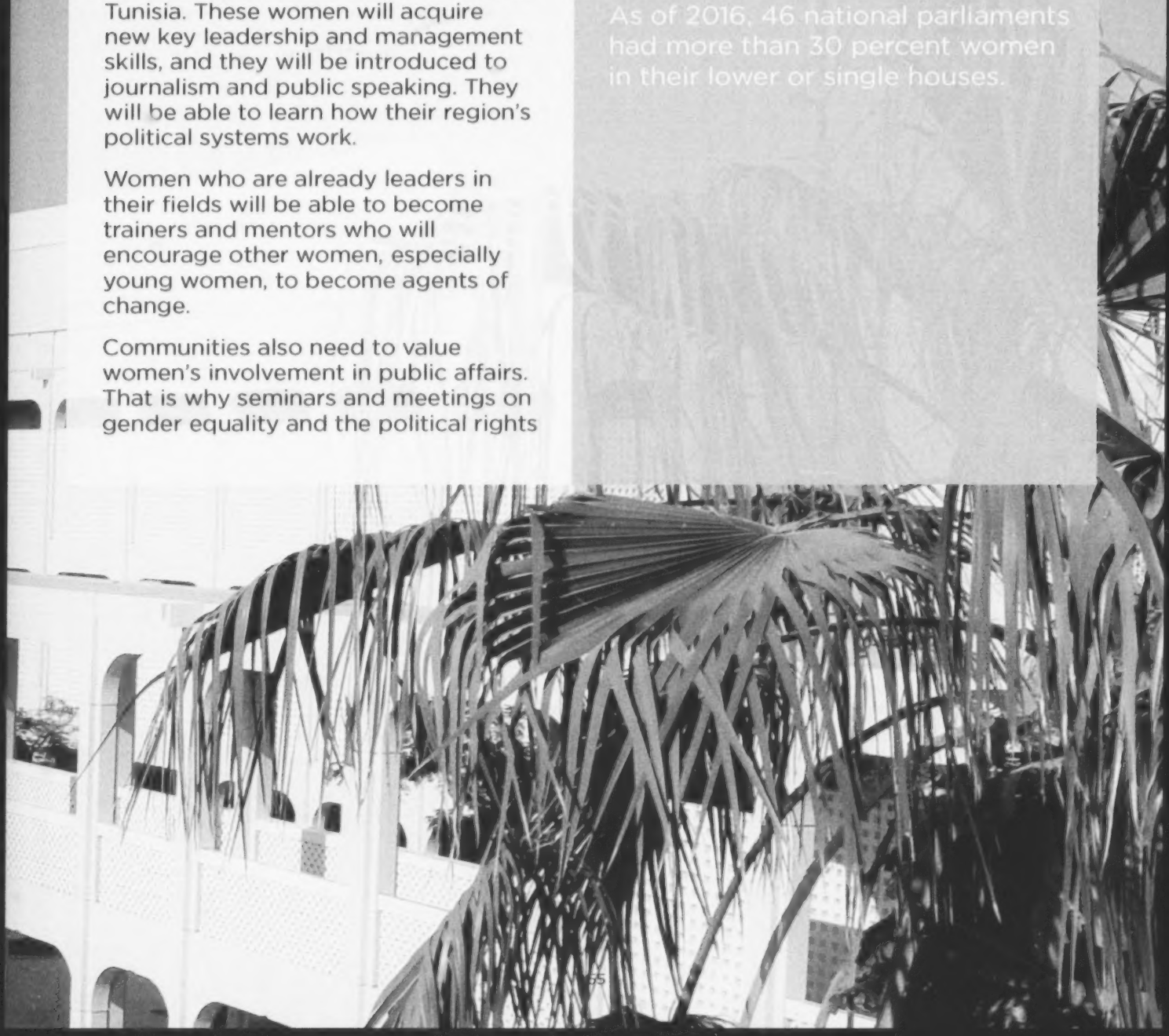
politics, at the heads of companies and in other decision-making spheres.

Training will be offered to more than 9,000 women in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. These women will acquire new key leadership and management skills, and they will be introduced to journalism and public speaking. They will be able to learn how their region's political systems work.

Women who are already leaders in their fields will be able to become trainers and mentors who will encourage other women, especially young women, to become agents of change.

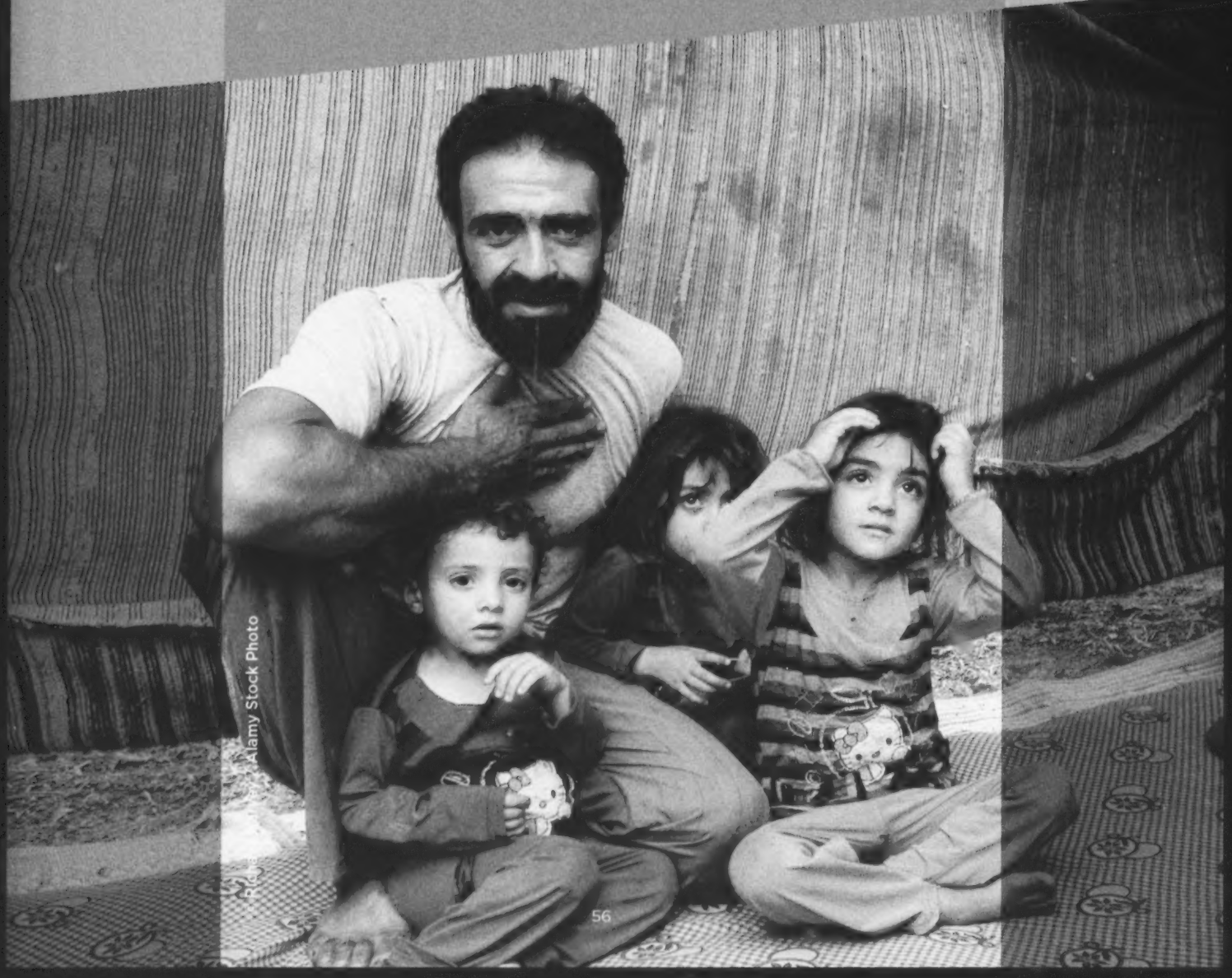
Communities also need to value women's involvement in public affairs. That is why seminars and meetings on gender equality and the political rights of women will be held in the three countries, including in rural areas, with the participation of about 3,000 men.

As of 2016, 46 national parliaments had more than 30 percent women in their lower or single houses.



Action area 6

PEACE AND SECURITY



Rich... by Alamy Stock Photo

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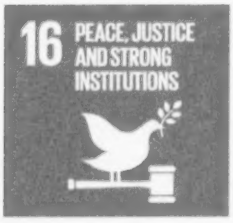
Canada is committed to reducing threats and to facilitating stability and development in fragile states and states affected by armed conflict. Canada encourages greater participation by women in peace processes and, as part of its National Action Plan, works to advance the global women, peace and security agenda.



Around the world, violent conflict and terrorism persists, resulting in ongoing and complex security challenges for all nations. For many countries, these challenges—which can range from transnational crime and terrorism to the trafficking of people, weapons and drugs—are overwhelming. Continued international support is needed to establish and maintain peace and security, both for the safety of citizens and as a precondition for sustainable development.

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that there can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development (reflected in SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Building and sustaining peace in fragile and conflict-affected contexts requires rapid and flexible interventions, as well as longer-term efforts to address the root causes of instability.

The good news is that when women are involved in peace and security efforts, solutions are more comprehensive, reflecting what a community actually needs to recover from conflict.[75] This increases community buy-in and offers a better opportunity to address the root causes of conflict. When women are included, peace processes are more likely to be successful and peace agreements are more likely to endure.

Source: UN Women

Studies also show that the security of women and girls is one of the best predictors of a state's peacefulness.[76] When women and girls have the safety and security they need, communities are safer, poverty decreases, development opportunities increase and entire families benefit.[77] Peacebuilding and state building in the aftermath of conflict provide important opportunities for advancing women's rights and gender equality.

The United Nations Security Council's Women, Peace and Security Agenda calls on all countries to address the differential impact of conflict situations on women and girls, and their participation in peacebuilding efforts. Canada developed its first Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security in 2011, and more than 60 other countries have developed their own action plans.

However, the UN's 2015 Global Study on Women, Peace and Security concluded that significant gaps remain. For example, sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls is becoming more pervasive in conflict settings; women continue to be sidelined in peacebuilding processes; women's rights defenders in conflict settings continue to be harassed, detained and murdered; and targeted gender equality efforts in response to conflict remain weak and fragmented.

CANADA'S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (2017-2022)

Canada's national action plan will take Canada's national action plan takes a whole-of-government approach to ensure that women are fully included in the development of sustainable interventions in fragile and conflict-affected states. It includes targets and activities for development assistance, humanitarian action, and peace and security initiatives. Annual public reports and close collaboration with civil society organizations will help us report on progress.

More strategic interventions are required to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all peace and security efforts.

TO PROMOTE STABILIZATION, MAINTAIN SECURITY IN CONFLICT ZONES, AND ENCOURAGE WOMEN AND GIRLS TO BE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN PEACEBUILDING, CANADA WILL...

...support the meaningful participation of women and women's rights organizations in peace negotiations and conflict-prevention efforts. This will be accomplished through a combination of targeted support for local women's organizations and programming to help women strengthen their mediation and negotiation skills and expertise so that they can more fully participate in—and influence—peace negotiations. Canada will also advocate at international policy-making events for a stronger role for women and girls in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

...help advance women's rights in post-conflict state-building. Constitutional reform efforts and post-conflict state-building offer important opportunities to advance a women's rights agenda and address historical discrimination. Canada will work with government and civil society, including organizations that advance women's rights, to ensure that commitments to gender equality are reflected in reform efforts. Canada will also advocate for the respect and protection of the human rights of women and girls in its international and multilateral engagements. And Canada will train police to be better prepared to respond to sexual and gender-based violence and will help increase the employment of women in the security sector.

...help prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict zones and enforce its zero-tolerance policy for abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers. Canada will strengthen accountability mechanisms, backed up by greater support for local women's organizations and movements, which often advocate on behalf of victims of violence. To ensure that peacekeepers and other military personnel are best able to execute their duties, Canada will also develop and facilitate training and pre-deployment courses on gender equality and context-specific gender norms.

Canada's military experience: gender equality in action

Among our allies, the Canadian Armed Forces are regarded as leaders on gender issues in the military. Women participate meaningfully in virtually all aspects of domestic and international missions. The Canadian Armed Forces have developed and implemented policies of equal opportunity and are making considerable effort to attract greater numbers of qualified women.

Incorporating gender perspectives into the preparation, conduct and evaluation of missions enables the Canadian Armed Forces to increase operational effectiveness and enhance understanding of the challenges faced by populations at risk in areas of armed conflict or natural disaster.

Military members also receive continuing education and training to raise awareness of the differential impact of conflict, natural disasters and humanitarian emergences on women, men, girls and boys.

Though much has been done to promote gender equality in the Canadian Armed Forces, more work is needed to ensure that Canada's military reflects and respects the needs of the women it employs and serves. Canada is committed to making its military a true example of gender equality in action.

Photo: MDN/FAC

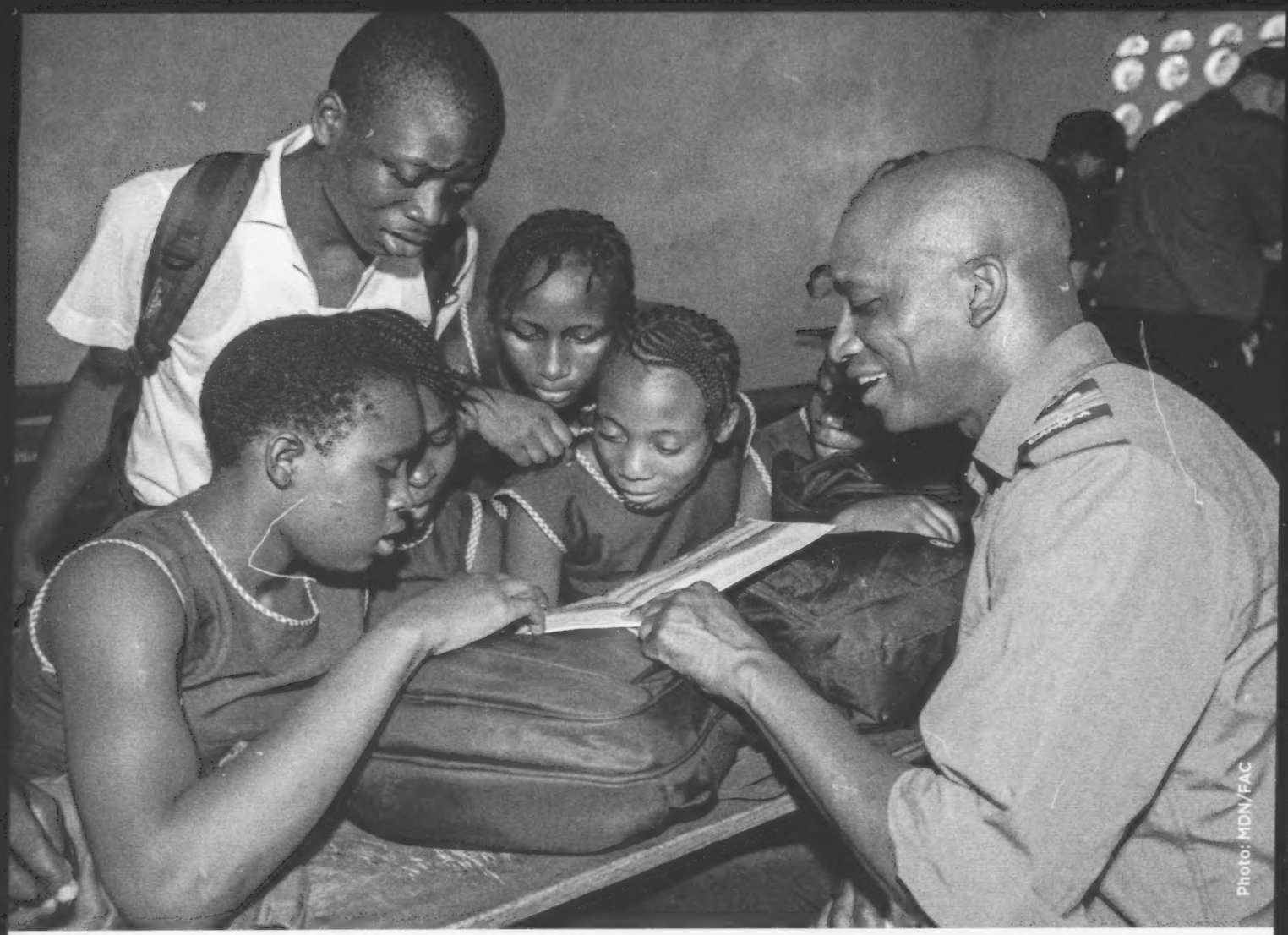


Photo: MDN/FAC

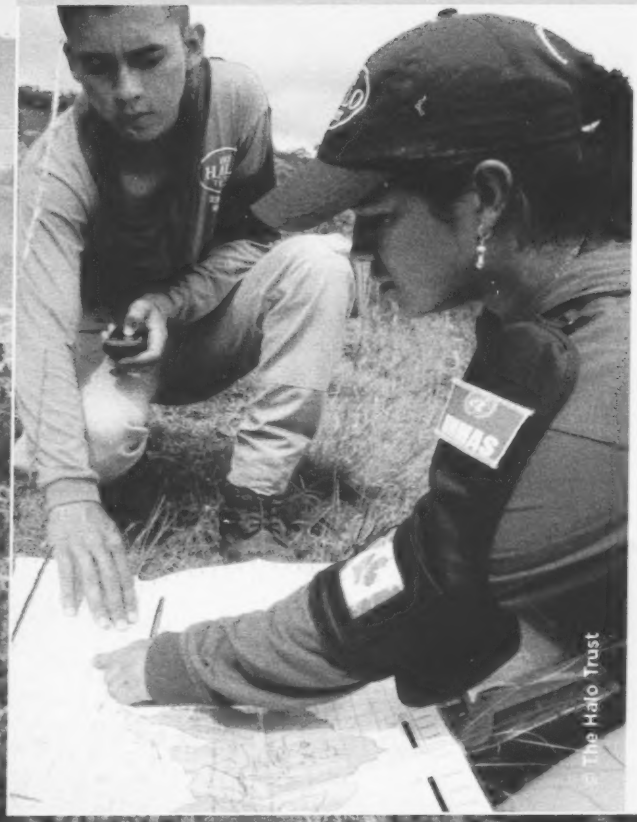
KEY FACTS

PEACE AND SECURITY

- Women are able to provide peace and security outreach to other women, yet from 1992 to 2011, only 9 percent of peace negotiators were women and only 3 percent of UN military peacekeepers were women.[78]
- Women's participation in the peacebuilding process increases by 35 percent the probability that a peace agreement will last for at least 15 years.[79]
- Data from 40 countries shows what when there is a greater proportion of woman officers on a police force, victims are more comfortable reporting incidents of sexual assault.[80]
- Only 2 percent of donor assistance for peace and security in fragile contexts in 2012-13 targeted gender equality as a principal objective.[81]

OUR POLICY IN ACTION

WOMEN AS AGENTS OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN COLOMBIA



Noralba Guarín fled FARC guerilla recruiters twice. The first time, she was 13. The second time, a few years later, she was living in Cartagena with her husband. They refused and her husband was found dead shortly afterwards. Noralba was pregnant with her first child.

Over 7 million Colombians were displaced during the country's more than six decades of armed conflict. Despite the signing of a peace accord in 2016, insecurity is rampant. One of the challenges: removing the thousands of anti-personnel mines in the country.

"When I was little," Noralba recalls, "I was told to be careful when I walked outside or I'd get blown to bits."

© Jesse Kraft / Alamy Stock Photo

Landmines have killed over 12,400 people in Colombia since 1990. Much of the country's cropland and many of its roads and schools have been abandoned for fear of mines.

Canada supports Colombia in its peace process, including through humanitarian mine clearance by a local organization in 10 municipalities. The mine clearers are recruited locally.

Women rarely do such work in Colombian society, but Noralba was encouraged to apply during a training session held in the public square in Argelia.

The organization provides men and women, including veterans, with fair working conditions. It gives women management positions and visible roles in their work with residents to find mined areas.

Noralba is helping to restore peace. She is creating safe zones that restore access to farmlands, markets and public services.

This project will help 60,000 displaced Colombians return to their homes and will benefit over 27,000 people in some of the country's poorest communities.

International assistance

IMPROVING OUR EFFECTIVENESS

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By prioritizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy represents a significant evolution in how we work.

This new approach will enable Canada to maximize the effectiveness of its international assistance, provide more integrated and responsive assistance, invest in innovation and research, deliver better reporting on results, develop more effective partnerships, and concentrate on those regions of the world where we can make the greatest difference in reducing poverty and inequality, particularly for women and girls.

BETTER-LEVERAGED INVESTMENT

Official development assistance (ODA) from donor country governments to recipient countries now accounts for a much smaller proportion of the resources contributing to development than it used to. While ODA remains an important resource, particularly for least-developed countries, private funding flows to developing countries—including remittances, foreign direct investment and trade—now exceed ODA contributions by a ratio of five to one.

Total global ODA in 2016 was US$142.6 billion. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in comparison, an estimated US$7 trillion per year will be needed until 2030. To achieve such a level of investment will require a coordinated international effort. We must also direct ODA where needs are greatest. New partnerships and initiatives that can leverage additional financing and investment will be needed. The good news is that, today, the financial resources and mechanisms available beyond government that can be used to support development are greater and more diverse than in the past.

To expand the scope and improve the effectiveness of our international assistance, Canada will increase and diversify the range of mechanisms for working with the private sector to support sustainable development. This means transforming the private sector's current service-provider role into that of a partner investing in the achievement of development results. New instruments such as repayable contributions will be introduced that will better enable Canada to mobilize new streams of financing for underserved private sector partners in developing countries, including woman-led businesses.

Canada's contributions will also be leveraged by expanding and enhancing the options to contribute to initiatives through funding relationships that present a mix of repayable and non-repayable support.

Canada will work closely with other donors, including in developing countries, and support selected new funding mechanisms to encourage more innovative and cost-effective private- and voluntary-sector solutions to sustainable development challenges. This will include increasing opportunities for other donors to contribute to Canada-administered initiatives.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE

Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) invests in knowledge, innovation and solutions to improve lives and livelihoods in the developing world. Bringing together the right partners around opportunities for impact, it builds leaders for today and tomorrow and helps drive change for those who need it most.

The Centre provides funding to researchers in developing countries to examine problems crucial to their communities. In 2015-16, IDRC supported close to 700 research initiatives with 569 think tanks and research institutions across the world.

A Canadian success story: IDRC's partnership with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Public Health Agency of Canada and Global Affairs Canada helped develop a new vaccine that is helping to eradicate the Ebola virus in Central Africa.

Canada's new, Montréal-based Development Finance Institute, a subsidiary of Export Development Canada, will play a critical role in facilitating greater private-sector investment in developing countries where access to capital is limited. By doing so, the new institution will help to create jobs, promote economic growth and reduce poverty in developing countries.

In line with the government's feminist approach to international assistance, the new institute will help ensure that woman entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises that support women's economic empowerment, but who often find it difficult to access financing, are not left behind.

The Development Finance Institute has been capitalized with $300 million over five years, which will enable it to attract funds from other partners and support private investments in developing countries through the use of loans, loan guarantees or equity stakes.

When it comes to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, a more integrated approach is needed—one that also includes diplomacy, trade, security and the expertise of a wide range of Canadian government departments and agencies.

MORE INTEGRATED ASSISTANCE

Canada's Official Development Assistance Accountability Act requires that all ODA contribute to poverty reduction, take into account the perspectives of the poor, and be consistent with international human rights standards.

The ODA that Canada provides to developing countries is a valuable source of support to people and communities in need. However, we need to improve our ability to engage the right mix of mechanisms and partnerships in a given context, taking smart risks to deliver greater impact.

When it comes to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, a more integrated approach is needed—one that also includes diplomacy, trade, security and the expertise of a wide range of Canadian government departments and agencies. This is in keeping with Agenda 2030, which recognizes that global challenges are connected and require a coordinated response.

Integrated responses are particularly important in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Canada has provided an integrated response to the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, deploying a range of assets and assistance that includes integrated humanitarian, development, and peace and security support, coupled with the efforts of National Defence (see Canada's Integrated Response to Protracted Crisis in the Middle East), as well as refugee settlement initiatives led by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Better integration of development and other objectives, such as trade, can have positive economic effects for developing countries—and for Canada. As a trading nation, Canada's economic strength depends on diversifying trade and identifying new markets for its goods and services. The same holds true for many developing countries. By investing in developing countries, Canada can help to encourage inclusive growth and create jobs and improve incomes—particularly for women and girls.

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CANADA'S INTEGRATED RESPONSE TO THE PROTRACTED CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The complex armed conflict in Syria and Iraq and the resulting humanitarian crisis call for an integrated Government of Canada response. In addition to National Defence efforts to help the international community defeat Daesh, Global Affairs Canada is providing $1.1 billion over three years in multi-year humanitarian assistance, stabilization and development support to affected and displaced populations, including in the neighbouring countries of Jordan and Lebanon.

Canada's humanitarian assistance prioritizes basic needs for families—such as clean drinking water, adequate food and a safe place to sleep—and also seeks to provide better access to public services, including health care and education. Assistance is aimed at improving the quality of life for affected populations by supporting efforts to create jobs and support existing livelihoods. By providing multi-year humanitarian assistance, Canada is enabling our humanitarian partners to plan more effectively and better respond to evolving needs in the communities where they work.

A particular effort is also being made to meet the specific needs of women and girls affected by this ongoing crisis. This includes psychosocial support and specialized medical services for the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as the provision of reproductive health services.

As the economies of developing countries strengthen and become more stable, there is an opportunity for Canada to form new and mutually beneficial trading partnerships. This in turn creates more opportunities and can lead to more good, well-paying jobs for Canadians. For example, China and India were among Canada's top aid recipients in the 1990s and now are considered important economic, diplomatic, trading and cultural partners. The networks, knowledge and sustainable results that we build through our international assistance programming generate long-term benefits for global stability—and for Canadians.

By ensuring that their investments and operations abroad maintain the highest standards of corporate social responsibility and transparency, Canadian companies can play a critical role in elevating sustainable and responsible business practices. To that end, we are committed to strengthening our policy framework to ensure Canadian companies reflect Canadian values, respect human rights and operate responsibly, particularly in operations in developing countries where Canada is providing international assistance. We are also committed to ensuring that Canada demonstrates real global leadership on corporate social responsibility more broadly, in a manner that fully complements our feminist international assistance.

Finally, recognizing that trade has not always benefited everyone equally, Canada is committed to a progressive trade agenda that fully considers gender equality during trade negotiations; this agenda also includes strong environmental protections and ensuring that labour provisions of all trade agreements are non-discriminatory.

MORE RESPONSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE ASSISTANCE

Canada will provide its international assistance in ways that are more rapid and more effective in reaching local populations. We will streamline and accelerate our funding and reporting procedures to reduce the administrative burden on our funding recipients. This will ensure that our assistance is more responsive, more transparent and more predictable. We will develop joint programming mechanisms that enable innovative funding partnerships. We will provide multi-year humanitarian assistance for

protracted crises. And we will direct more assistance to local organizations in developing countries (including women's organizations and movements).

More responsive international assistance also requires more efficient and effective funding mechanisms and approaches. We need to be willing to take responsible risks, with decisions based on evidence and learning. Canada will expand its range of tools to enable joint program assistance with other donors, multi-stakeholder partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms, including "blended" finance. We will streamline our funding application processes and modernize our results-based management and risk management procedures to better respond to specific country and partner contexts and support timelier funding decisions. This will help improve the predictability and transparency of our funding decisions.

The Government of Canada manages the financial resources for ODA and other forms of international assistance through its International Assistance Envelope (IAE). Managed by the Department of Finance Canada and Global Affairs Canada, the IAE includes resources that are dedicated annually for contributions to international finance institutions (such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and regional development banks), development cooperation, development research (via the IDRC), peace and security, and crisis response, as well as specific initiatives led by other Government of Canada departments and agencies. Canada is committed to providing greater transparency and reporting on IAE expenditures. We will publicly disclose the level of the IAE on an annual basis.

As part of the Government of Canada's results and delivery agenda, Global Affairs Canada will continue to report to Parliament and to Canadians via the annual report on the *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act* and through the Departmental Results Report, which will be delivered in a more streamlined, accessible format, with improved indicators. In addition, Global Affairs Canada will continue to publish international assistance program information (including results) via the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

This shift will establish Canada as a feminist donor and a leader in promoting the empowerment of women and girls around the world.

CANADA AS A FEMINIST DONOR

Historical analysis of Canada's international assistance spending since 2010 reveals that only 1 to 2 percent of investments have supported programming specifically designed to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls—in 2015-16, only 2 percent of such spending was directed toward this goal. Additionally, program evaluations have demonstrated a diminishing focus on gender equality over time, especially over the past decade. This does not match the ambitious and positive role that Canadians expect their country to play on the world stage.

To make our feminist approach a reality, we will change this—and systematically measure our progress and results. Going forward, Canada will increase its support for initiatives that advance gender equality and women's empowerment as their principal focus.

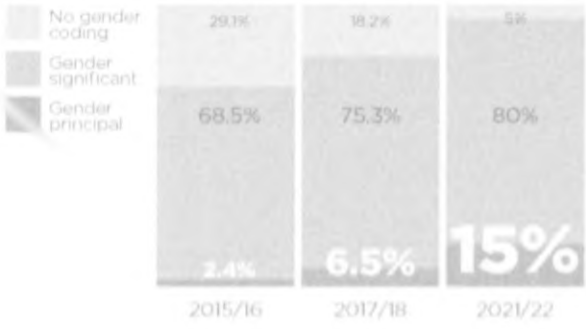
We will ensure that 15 percent of all bilateral international development assistance investments *specifically* target gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2021-22. This represents both a dramatic shift in focus and a significant increase in investment.

We will also improve and increase the *integration* of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across all international assistance efforts. We commit to investing no less than 80 percent of bilateral international development assistance through Global Affairs Canada for initiatives designed to achieve these goals.

Combining these two objectives means that, by 2021-22 at the latest, at least 95 percent of Canada's bilateral international development assistance investments will either target or integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This shift will establish Canada as a feminist donor and a leader in promoting the empowerment of women and girls around the world.

Global Affairs Canada will also ensure active and meaningful participation and decision making by women and girls in all international assistance initiatives, including in project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Global Affairs Canada bilateral international development budgets by gender targeting



Source: Global Affairs Canada

A FOCUS ON INNOVATION, RESEARCH AND RESULTS

As Canada focuses its efforts on delivering international assistance that is more integrated and responsive, it does so in a world that is itself constantly evolving and improving.

Thanks to advances in agriculture, farmers are now able to increase yields and produce food more efficiently. Better health systems and the rollout of medical innovations are helping people live longer and are halting the spread of infectious diseases such as Ebola, AIDS and tuberculosis. Affordable Internet and mobile phone services make it possible for more citizens in developing countries to access financial and health services and to connect with others so that they can more effectively advocate for change.

These improvements present both challenges and opportunities for Canada's international assistance efforts. To better respond to constant changes in the development "ecosystem," Global Affairs Canada will build innovation into its assistance programs by adopting new business models, policy practices, technologies and ways of delivering products and services. Canada will build innovation into its international assistance, encouraging greater experimentation and scaling-up of new solutions to development challenges.

Global Affairs Canada will also seek out new ways of working and new partnerships that can increase the effectiveness of Canada's development efforts. This will include innovative funding partnerships and greater investments in research, as well as closer collaboration with Canada's International Development Research Centre, Canadian universities and other research institutions.

Global Affairs Canada is developing stronger and more meaningful performance indicators to track the performance of our international assistance and make course corrections as appropriate.

MORE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Today, effective and productive partnerships that advance the interests of women and girls are no longer restricted to government-to-government relationships. Civil society, multilateral and international organizations, philanthropic foundations, developing country governments at all levels, the private sector, emerging official donors, and other actors all have a role to play in building a world where gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the rule, not the exception.

Working with governments

To be effective, international assistance must respond to local needs and priorities. Partner country governments at all levels establish these priorities and they are—and will continue to be—primary partners for Canada's international assistance. Beyond financial assistance, Canada can offer partner governments experience and expertise and the ability to provide timely and relevant technical assistance, including in responding to and reducing the risk of disasters.

Engaging civil society

Canadians have a long and proud tradition of working to improve living conditions for others around the world, whether through work with civil society and multilateral partners or by serving as volunteers. Eager to make a difference, Canadians, including youth and people from our diverse cultural communities, are at the forefront of our international development and humanitarian efforts.

Peaceful and prosperous civil societies are more likely to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, better able to respond to the effects of—and address the root causes of—poverty, and better able to build economies that work for everyone. Civil society organizations possess valuable experience and expertise and have a strong understanding of local challenges and opportunities. New partnerships between Canadian, international and local civil society organizations will foster new ideas and solutions, and ensure that Canada's international assistance is more effective and yields lasting results.

The government benefits from a robust ecosystem of civil society partners who deliver international assistance programming, contribute to ongoing policy dialogue on global issues and engage Canadians in support of international development, the 2030 Agenda and Canada's international assistance priorities. **Global Affairs Canada will continue to engage Canadian civil society organizations and ensure our approach to partnerships is aligned with our new policy on partnerships with civil society for international assistance.**

We will also provide $100 million over five years in dedicated funding for small and medium-sized Canadian civil society organizations so they can develop and implement innovative programming in partnership with local organizations to support the six action areas, notably Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls.

WORKING WITH LA FRANCOPHONIE

Over the next three decades, the world's francophone population is expected to reach 700 million. By 2050, Africa will have 90 percent of the world's francophone youth between the ages of 15 and 29, an impressive force for change, innovation and development.

Comprising 84 states and governments and 274 million inhabitants on five continents, La Francophonie is a natural partner for Canada's international assistance efforts.

As Canadians, we are proud of our linguistic duality, the dynamism of our own francophone communities and the role we play within La Francophonie. By engaging directly with members of La Francophonie, we will continue to promote the values of democratic governance, human rights and the rule of law; expand our support for women's economic empowerment and their sexual and reproductive health and rights; address climate change; and prevent radicalization.

It is a policy that seeks to offer real opportunities—the kind that will make a lasting difference in the lives of women and girls, help to break the cycle of poverty for all and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world.

Working with multilateral partners

Canada has a strong reputation for being able to work constructively with a broad range of multilateral partners. Canada will draw on its membership in key multilateral groups—including the United Nations, the G7, the G20, the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and others—to champion gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We will continue to speak out about the value of diversity and inclusion, and the importance of human rights for all. We will lead on climate action, renew our relationship with Indigenous peoples in Canada and abroad, and advocate for progressive approaches to migration and refugee assistance.

Engaging the private sector

Canada recognizes the fundamental role that the private sector plays when it comes to driving economic growth through trade and investment. An important source of expertise, the private sector also has a great deal to offer to countries and companies that are seeking new and more sustainable ways of doing business.

For its part, Canada will support developing countries in their efforts to create stable regulatory systems that can attract investment and help businesses to thrive. Canada will engage in private sector partnerships that attract co-financing and investment, help identify new solutions to development challenges and generate more opportunities for the poorest and most vulnerable to benefit from economic growth.

RESPONDING BETTER TO NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

For our international assistance to reach—and make a real difference to—the poorest and most vulnerable, it must be directed to those parts of the world where the incidence and depth of poverty and fragility are most acute. But it must also be nimble and able to respond quickly to evolving needs and opportunities: how and where we provide assistance needs to become more flexible.

To that end, Canada will discontinue its "countries-of-focus" approach, which concentrated development assistance on a fixed shortlist of countries.

Canada will adapt its international assistance approaches to better respond to local needs and opportunities in the diverse range of countries where we work. We will target our assistance to where we can make a significant difference in the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable, including those living in fragile contexts.

With this new approach, Canada will support sustainable development through:

1. MORE EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH FRAGILE STATES AND COUNTRIES IN CRISIS

   Better-integrated support will help developing countries facing crisis situations or protracted humanitarian challenges.

2. STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

   Longer-term development assistance for low-income countries will reduce poverty and vulnerability and create the conditions for more inclusive growth.

3. PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR TRANSITION

   Targeted assistance that supports more democratic, inclusive and accountable governance, and that supports sustained economic growth in middle-income countries, will help those countries transition into fuller, more self-sufficient economic partners.

Canada will also maintain an ability to provide targeted and shorter-term assistance to a range of countries and regions.

As part of this new approach, Canada will increase its support for least-developed countries. And we will scale up support to those countries where population growth and climate change will continue to have a disproportionate impact. Half of the world's poorest citizens live in sub-Saharan Africa. For that reason, **Canada will ensure that no less than 50 percent of its bilateral international development assistance is directed to sub-Saharan African countries by 2021-22.**

CONCLUSION

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy is a reflection of who we are as Canadians. It expresses our belief that it is possible to build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. It guides our support for the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. And it particularly recognizes that women and girls are powerful agents of change for development and peace.

With its strong focus on gender equality, and built upon six action areas chosen for their ability to deliver transformational change, this policy will help address the needs of those living in poverty and facing ongoing inequality and conflict. It is a policy that seeks to offer real opportunities—the kind that will make a lasting difference in the lives of women and girls, help to break the cycle of poverty for all and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. A world where no one is left behind.

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